The Nation

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EDITORIAL

A FIGHT TO THE DEATH?

George Bush seems to think of the Eastern Airlines strike as his chance to bust a union early in his term, just as Reagan busted Patco. Bush's refusal to order the customary sixty-day cooling-off period seemed predicated on the hope that the strike would collapse quickly. But the pilots' unexpected—and unprecedented—solidarity with the machinists has frustrated the union-busting plans of Frank Lorenzo, head of Eastern's parent, Texas Air.

Lorenzo is an *echt* 1980s character who has built his empire on borrowed money and political connections rather than on operational skill. Texas Air is a maze of cross-holdings and shell companies that are collectively $5 billion in debt. Consequently, eight cents out of every sales dollar goes to interest, four times the level of the higher-wage (and profitable) American Airlines. Despite offering the lowest pay in the industry, Lorenzo can't make money on Continental Airlines. And with Eastern, he took a sickly airline that was losing $150 million a year in 1986 and turned it into a moribund one that lost $450 million in 1988 and has now filed for bankruptcy.

Lorenzo has plenty of friends in Washington besides the President. Bush's director of Congressional relations, Frederick McClure, is a former Texas Air vice president. And then there are the Rent-A-Crats—Democratic heavyweights like Robert Strauss, Joseph Califano and a host of former aides to Edward Kennedy—who have promoted Texas Air's interests. Party chair Ron Brown comes from a law firm with close ties to Lorenzo. The strikers, on the other hand, have few brand-name friends besides Jesse Jackson.

It's anybody's guess where it will all end. For now, this looks like a fight to the death. But whatever the outcome of the strike, maybe, just maybe, the political tide is beginning to turn against the union-busters.

FAULTY TOWER
Christopher Hitchens

FIGHTING THE POLLUTERS
Dick Russell

URUGUAY'S MEMORIES
Cynthia Brown and Robert K. Goldman
Eduardo Galeano

RIGHT-WING BLUES
David Corn

'PLANTATION HOUSEHOLD'
Christine Stansell

WITH MAL

THE N.Y. SCANDA ED KOCH

MARK GREEN

"If Jimmy Breslin didn't were crooks, how the he you surprised to learn tha missioners have been convi ing to myself, 'Geez, what di

Welcome to Kochtalk, show whose leading charact fuses audiences with a blizza tions. But now, after a popu pair of critics threaten to ru Newfield and Wayne Barrett's *Koch and the Betrayal of New* Row, 466 pp., $22.50) is an ab of corruption that meticulously Edward Koch's alibis and divers

Koch is seeking a third term in tion with implications for any about our cities. Koch interviewe read this book are as guilty as the M thors' final verdict—being someo want to know." Let's examine Koch rhetorical questions through the N rett lens:

Diversion No. 1: The Breslin Analo nist Jimmy Breslin, though lacking subp er, uncovered the bribery scandal unde Borough President Donald Manes and im published a scathing exposé in the *Daily* Mayor Koch, on the other hand, with a De ment of Investigations at his disposal, clai ignorance of high-level corruption despite numerous hints. Consider two of many examples:

§ After Herb Ryan, a

(*Continued on Page 422*)

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standard in elections, especially for President, is this: Who is the most honest, progressive candidate *who can win*? I've learned firsthand the difference between coming in first and second. By this reasonable standard, it's a bit premature to endorse for 1992.

Marty Jezer raises an interesting point on which critics of the current process can—and do—disagree. I support matching public funds for Congressional races, as we now have for presidential primary campaigns, as a way to insure that scarce taxpayer dollars are not wasted on frivolous candidates; and people who give $250 or less, which is the trigger for the presidential match, usually do contribute more because of principle than entree. In this context, let's not leave out the useful reform of providing minimal free TV and radio time for general election candidates (as most Western democracies permit). Recent books by Phil Stern (*The Best Congress Money Can Buy*) and Brooks Jackson (*Honest Graft*) intelligently survey the problems and solutions in the area of campaign finance. *Mark Green*

BLIND JUSTICE?

Middletown, Conn.

Although your insights into the Supreme Court's decision in *Richmond v. Croson* ["'Stigmatic Harm,'" Feb. 13] highlight the continual conservative assault on civil rights and sardonically question the degree to which minorities suffer psychological injury from enforced economic opportunity, your editorial overlooks two pernicious implications of the majority opinion. The contention that the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause does not pertain to the fifty states but can only be enforced by Congress puts the future of civil rights into the hands of the Federal government, which has always reacted sluggishly when civil liberties are threatened. Of course, this is precisely the precedent the Court yearns for, and its consequences will be disastrous for those Americans interested in freedom.

More devastating yet, Sandra Day O'Connor, writing for the majority, suggested that Thurgood Marshall, in his dissenting opinion, erred in contending that race and racism still pervade all avenues of American life. Her ahistorical mouthings hark back to the very President who elevated O'Connor to her present position. It was with the onset of Reaganism that the nation began to hear claims that racism was dead, vanquished by the civil rights movement's victories in the field and thus no longer in need of attention.

Certainly the overwhelming majority of *Nation* readers would welcome the day when, as Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed, people "will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." We have not, by any means, reached such a millennium. Accordingly, the majority's contention that racism and race no longer figure in American life transmogrifies civil rights successes that were achieved with bloodshed, and rolls back equal opportunity programs to the days when African-Americans' only proof of intentional discrimination came at the end of a rope. For the Supreme Court to argue that America no longer needs to factor race into its decision-making process and its laws insures that the legitimate claims of blacks will not be addressed and that the government can continue to dismantle enactments designed to guarantee equal opportunity and protection.

Twenty-one years ago the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded that America "was moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal." The Court's unfortunate decision seeks to build on and widen that disparity in the hypocritical guise of discounting racial differences because they are no longer relevant. Until we understand the continued primacy of race in American life, we all run the risk of repeating a part of our history which was far too expensive in human lives and misery. *Marshall Hyatt*

HEIGHT OF FOLLY

Cambridge, Mass.

It is interesting that in all the reporting on the controversy over John Tower's "drinking" and "womanizing" in his nomination hearings, there is no mention of the towering fact about him that is obvious to a TV viewer: that he is short—so that his (possibly ostentatious) drinking and womanizing is something that would be demanded of him by the culture to prove his masculinity (as opposed to being a wimpy nonentity) especially for the macho job of Defense Secretary in this land of John Wayne and the *Lonesome Dove* (last month's highly rated TV miniseries on the American West). *Satish Chandra*

At 5'6", Tower would have added to the Republican Defense Secretary stature gap that began after Harold Brown, 6'0", was replaced by Caspar Weinberger, 5'8", and that continued with Frank Carlucci, 5'7". Said to be on Bush's "short list" to replace Tower: Brent Scowcroft, 5'8", Donald Rumsfeld, 5'10", James Schlesinger, 6'4", and Norman Augustine (chair of Martin Marietta), 6'4", all presumably better equipped to stand up to Sam Nunn, 5'11". But the problem is not short men, it's shortsightedness. —The Editors

CORRECTION

Due to an editing error, the last name of ABC News anchor Peter Jennings was misspelled in the page-one editorial, "I Hereby Pledge . . . ," of our March 20 issue.

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EDITORIALS.

Poetic Injustice

If the nomination of John Tower as Defense Secretary did nothing else, it sensitized the center and perhaps even the near right to the notion that the F.B.I.—its assumptions, procedures and processes—leaves something to be desired where political rights, civil liberties and occasionally even the truth itself are concerned.

Consider the shocked tone of *The Wall Street Journal*'s former foreign editor, Karen Elliott House, in the wake of a visit by two F.B.I. agents, who interviewed her (and promised her anonymity) regarding her relations, or lack of them, with Tower: "If my experience is in any way typical of the 500 or more interviews conducted by F.B.I. agents in compiling the secret dossier on Sen. Tower's career and character, the U.S. Senate is pursuing its debate on the basis of rumor, gossip and innuendo that any American citizen clearly would consider character assassination."

It's poetic justice that House et al. have made this discovery the same week that Frank Wilkinson, the last person imprisoned for refusing to answer questions from the

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notorious House Un-American Activities Committee, asked the courts to vacate his conviction for contempt of Congress—after thirty years—due to F.B.I. improprieties he found documented by a memorandum unearthed among the 132,000 pages of files that the Bureau had maintained on him.

The Bureau, of course, along with the C.I.A., is merely one of the more prominent participant-abusers in the wider culture of secrecy that pervades our national security state. The trial of Oliver North provides a veritable primer of the claims of national security that can be used to undermine civil liberties. And for the latest example of the phenomenon, see the account by Eve Pell that follows.

Chilly Draft

In an ominous change from the current regulations governing security clearances, millions of Federal employees and contractors will lose their right to due process if President Bush signs an executive order now headed for his desk.

At present, if a Federal employee or contractor doing business with the government applies for a security clearance and is denied, that person has the right to know why and the opportunity to correct misinformation. Under the proposed order, however, applicants for a clearance or for access to a higher grade of classified material would have no right to learn the reason they were refused. People who already hold clearances would still be entitled to learn why their clearance was revoked and to appeal. Still, those rights would be waived for C.I.A. employees and *anytime* an agency head decides that such procedures would threaten the "national security interests of the United States."

The draft executive order is the product of a five-year study by an interagency committee headed by Mary Lawton, the Justice Department's counsel for intelligence policy, who has never been enthusiastic about the Freedom of Information Act. Justice Department spokesman Loye Miller said that the interagency group submitted this draft order to the National Security Council in November 1987, and that it has been sitting there until now.

For journalists covering the Federal government, such draft regulations are cause for worry. Federal employees with clearances would have to report "all contacts with any persons who appear to be interested in obtaining, or who are attempting to obtain, unauthorized access to classified information." While this section appears to be an effort to enlist government workers as spy-catchers, it could easily hamper reporters.

The American Civil Liberties Union and several government employees' unions have launched a campaign against the proposed order, and a few politicians have joined in. Representative Don Edwards of California wrote the new President a letter asking him not to sign it. The letter focused mostly on the denial of the right to be informed of charges and to respond to them. But Edwards also took issue with the frighteningly vague criteria listed as grounds for denial of security clearances, like "exploitable conduct" and "indiscreet behavior." As A.C.L.U. attorney Allan Adler notes, John Tower could be summarily denied clearance under the proposed rules.

As one of his last acts, Ronald Reagan vetoed a bill to protect government whistle-blowers. Happily, President Bush has now gone on record as supporting a new version of the legislation. However, the executive order on security clearances would keep the threat to whistle-blowers alive, yet another reason the President should not sign it.

EVE PELL

Eve Pell is a staff reporter at the Center for Investigative Reporting in San Francisco.

What Bush Owes

The riots that swept Venezuela at the beginning of this month mark a new stage in the rapidly deteriorating Latin American debt crisis. Even Venezuela, one of the region's wealthiest and most stable democracies, has begun to suffer. Its popular government, less than two months old, has placed the needs of its foreign creditors above those of its citizens, whose fury and despair may be a foretaste of greater chaos to come—whether from the anger of the poor or a coup from the military—in worse-off debtor nations such as Brazil and Argentina.

At a Caracas press conference after the riots, Venezuela's new President, Carlos Andrés Pérez, warned starkly that 1989 "will be the year of new treatment on the foreign debt or the destruction of the region's democracies." Yet George Bush appears to be ignoring the warning. One reason is the general disarray that prevails in the Administration, which made it miss the Congressionally mandated February 23 deadline for developing a new debt policy. But beyond that, the plan outlined by Bush and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady is grossly inadequate to the magnitude of the problem.

Treasury officials describe the probable changes in U.S. debt policy as incremental and evolutionary. Bush has already ruled out most of the bold approaches that could deal with the roots of the crisis. He has rejected the proposal, supported by everyone from Mikhail Gorbachev to American Express chair James Robinson, for a debt management agency that would buy the banks' Latin American loans at secondary market rates and thus cut up to 50 percent off the amount owed. He has also opposed the idea of forgiveness for part of the debt, preferring debt write-downs by the banks on a voluntary basis. And he has ruled out relief through the allocation of new taxpayer money, although funds already contributed to the international lending institutions will be used. Secretary of State James Baker 3d and Brady disagree on the use of Japanese loans—Baker being reluctant to see Japan undermine U.S. control of the international lending institutions.

If these possibilities are eliminated, what remains is to lend more money—which is exactly what Bush did after the Venezuelan riots. This is an extension of the familiar strategy of giving new loans to pay off the old, which only

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drives debtor countries deeper into the hole. The Latin nations have proceeded under this policy since 1982; as a result, their total external debt has soared to $420 billion, while they have paid out $235 billion in interest payments.

Significantly, Bush has expressed support for the principle of debt reduction—but mainly through indirect means such as the provision of tax and regulatory relief for the banks. He argues that this will persuade the financial institutions to reduce the Latin debt voluntarily, but it is doubtful whether the major money-center banks will play along without guarantees. (Bush has limited the scope of any solution by ruling out Treasury support or new U.S. money for World Bank guarantees.) Bush's other proposal to reduce the debt is to expand the menu of voluntary options that includes such things as debt swaps and exit bonds.

This minimalist approach, with its belief that the banks should be allowed to solve their own problems without the government playing a major role, is unlikely to make much of a dent in the debt. It is a holding action that will probably fail to satisfy Congressional Democrats looking for a more far-reaching approach, or those who, like Henry Kissinger, urge a political solution and support the recent call by Latin American leaders for a summit meeting on the issue with the industrial nations. Indeed, the greatest pressure on Bush is likely to come from the region itself. By the end of this year, Venezuela's Pérez may well be joined by other populists: Carlos Menem, the Peronist candidate, is favored to win the Argentine presidency in May, and the leftist Leonel Brizola has a strong chance of victory in Brazil in November. Together, these populist leaders and the growing instability of the countries they rule may finally convince Bush that a sweeping solution to the debt crisis is needed, and that the time for pacifiers is over. MARLENE NADLE

Marlene Nadle is a senior research fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Time + Dallas = ?

In the three days following the March 4 announcement that Time Inc. and Warner Communications Inc. were merging to form the world's largest media conglomerate, *The New York Times* was positively agog. No fewer than fourteen separate stories, accompanied by the requisite charts and pictures, described the $18 billion embrace, and no factoid was too inconsequential. Over their Sunday fritatas, readers of the paper of record learned that before voting unanimously to approve the deal, Time Inc.'s board applauded a video of Warner programming that included scenes from its forthcoming *Batman* film.

In their rush to pick up such buttery popcorn, *Times* reporters were too pressed to speculate on the political, social and cultural impact of this latest mediamegamalgam—not even bothering with the hoary journalistic ritual of calling up someone for a "balancing" quote. Only after mining the business pages on day three did I unearth any serious hint that the Time-Warner combine just might be bad for the common weal: A three-inch A.P. item reporting that Ohio Senator Howard Metzenbaum was concerned about the merger's impact on media diversity and that he had asked the Justice Department to review the antitrust implications.

On day two, my preconceived conviction that the press would pretty much ignore or play down such inconvenient niggling had been momentarily shaken by a page-one headline in *The Times* declaring, "Time-Warner Merger Raises Concerns on Power of a Giant." But I was quickly reassured by the twenty-two paragraphs that followed, which made clear that the "troubling questions" raised by the coalescence had to do with the unfortunate plight of such lesser behemoths as the television networks, which suddenly face a very big bully on their block.

Elsewhere, *The Times* turned to other important questions: Would Herbert Siegel, the chair of Chris-Craft Industries and the only Warner board member to abstain in the merger vote, sulk in his tent and conjure up problems for the happy new conglomerate? Would J. Richard Munro, the staid chair of *Time*, be able to get along with Steven Ross, the freewheeling chair of Warner, until they retire and Time president Nicholas Nicholas Jr. takes over? (Will Michael Dukakis sue *The Times* if it keeps identifying the triumphant Nicholas as the son of Greek immigrants?)

Nicholas told *The Times*—"unhesitantly"—that the most compelling issue for the new company is "the ability of journalists to be truly independent." Management took this cue by telling *Time*'s business section not to cover the merger story, to which even *Newsweek* gave four columns (also merrily skipping over the anticompetitive ramifications). The furious *Time* staff finally prevailed, and the magazine came out with the story in its business pages a week after its competitor. It will be instructive to see how *Time*'s film critic reviews *Batman*.

The merger was revealed to the public just six days after *The Times* ran a paean to Time Inc. in its Sunday *Magazine* of February 26. Lester Bernstein, the former *Time* journalist who wrote the article, appears not to have had an inkling of the deal, but for all his fawning he did provide a sense of what to expect from the agglomeration's chief exec-apparent. Nicholas told him that he believed that "within a year it will become legally permissible for cable companies and broadcasting networks to own each other." As a next step, the networks would be allowed to swallow up production companies, and vice versa. As the awed Bernstein sat at his feet, Nicholas enthusiastically predicted that "there will emerge, on a worldwide basis, six, seven, eight vertically integrated media and entertainment megacompanies . . . and we think Time Inc. is going to be one." Well, make it Time Warner Inc.

The new company's menu offers the world books, records, films, magazines, TV programs: *Dallas*, *Night Court*, *The Accidental Tourist*, *Money*—even *Life* itself. No wonder *The Times* and other media collectors are not questioning the deal, are not noisily attacking the merger trend that is daily accelerating the country's terminal homogenization. When they contemplate Time Warner, they are struck dumb with envy. RICHARD POLLAK

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Three rousing huzzahs to Judge Rufus Reynolds, who presided over the Federal Bankruptcy Court in Columbia, South Carolina, and who ordered Jim and Tammy Bakker to repay $7.7 million of the swag they had extracted from the credulous Praise the Lord congregation. In an interview with *The Charlotte Observer* after the verdict, Judge Reynolds made an imperishable remark:

> What puzzled me was why people were interested in that little sawed-off runt.

This led to the jurist receiving telephone calls at his home from people demanding to know if he was a Christian. But I am praising him now not just for his verdict and not just for his invigorating departure from the norms of evasive "nonjudgmental" babble (he could after all have referred to the Bakkers and PTL as "troubled") but for asking the right question. Go back and read his remark again. Summon to your mind the features of Senator John Tower. Ask yourself, Why *is* George Bush so wedded to that little sawed-off runt?

If Bush had not run a rebarbative campaign on family values, Tower's record as grope-meister and fall-about Scotch artist would be even more irrelevant than it actually is. So would his record as revolving-door merchant between the war industry and the Pentagon, since it's probably impossible for anyone not on the take to make head or tail of the "procurement" business. But there are lots of sober, miserably married and continent Republicans in the world of the Busheoisie. Why the compromised, faulty Tower?

John Tower went to work for the Bush campaign seconds after turning in a report on the Iran/*contra* network that had even the most hardened cynics whistling a bit nervously. The Tower commissioners came into possession of a Craig Fuller memorandum that showed conclusively that Bush had lied flat out about his knowledge of the arms-for-hostages deal, and they chose to treat it as mysterious and inexplicable. They put the entire blame on the hapless Don Regan and recommended that the Reagan team "take charge," as if the President, the Vice President and the rest had never guessed the contents of their own basement.

Of the three members of that scandalous commission, whose findings were discredited even as the ink was drying, two have been rewarded with crucial Bush Administration nominations. (Why not Muskie as well as Tower and Scowcroft, you inquire? Well, someone has to sacrifice to the altar of partisanship and, as the Nixon plumbers demonstrated long ago, Ed Muskie is the type you can use once and then throw away.)

The attempt to pay off Tower and Scowcroft is only part of the lengthening shadow thrown by the unfinished Iran/*contra* cover-up. On March 1, in the Costa Rican town of San Carlos, John Hull was formally charged with drug trafficking and various other offenses against Costa Rican security. It was Hull's enormous estate on the Costa Rican border with Nicaragua, complete with *en suite* landing strip, that furnished the key base for illegal transfers of weapons to, and narcotics from, the undeclared war zone. Who was Oliver North's liaison with John Hull and the other quiet Americans who ran the secret war? Robert Owen. Where did Robert Owen first meet John Hull? In the office of a nutty right-wing Indiana Senator named J. Danforth Quayle. How much did Oliver North pay John Hull for his cooperation? $10,000 per month.

Given the Bush Administration's heroic stand on the drug war, it might be thought that the arrest of a Bush contact on charges of narcotics smuggling would attract some critical attention. But too much has apparently been invested in the official view that the threat of an outright impeachment scandal is safely "behind us," whoever "we" are supposed to be.

Yet perhaps the guardians of the consensus have relaxed too soon. In spite of the absurd attempts at throwing a national security cloak over the North trial, which have included interrupting the proceedings on February 28 to "protect" the identity of a murderous, drug-dealing *contra* leader whose name had actually been released in testimony last year, the trial faces the state-security reactionaries with a choice that was once very prettily phrased by Dorothy Parker:

> By the time you swear you're his,
> Shivering and sighing,
> And he vows his passion is
> Infinite, undying—
> Lady, make a note of this:
> One of you is lying.

Recall that Reagan thinks North "a national hero" and that North once remarked proudly, "The Old Man loves my ass." This gruesome romance is now on the rocks in a big way, and at least one of the lovers must be lying. I think it's probably both of them, but the fact that the press and the public were sold—partly by John Tower and Brent Scowcroft—an account of the *contra* war that literally *cannot* be true is a fact that has attracted insufficient comment.

From the Administration itself I can get no comment at all. I rang the Drug Enforcement Administration to ask Secretary William Bennett about the Hull case. (I repressed the desire to ask whether he wants the term "drug Czar" to be cognate with Caesar, Kaiser or Shah, which are its linguistic cousins.) I specified the stipend from North, the meetings in Quayle's office and the rest of the background. "No comment" from the "zero tolerance" office. Nancy Beck at the State Department, after repeatedly refusing to allow me to phrase the question, had no comment either. It's not as if either of these exalted bodies is normally unwilling to pronounce on their heroic struggle against "drug kingpins."

The Bush Administration already looks like a gang of rich tenth-raters who have run out of steam. That is because, "honeymoons" and other grotesqueries notwithstanding, it is the spawn of Reaganism and of the assault on the Constitution that Reaganism allowed and encouraged.

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ARTICLES.

ENVIRONMENTAL TENSIONS

'We Are All Losing the War'

DICK RUSSELL

The state of the environment has recently reached a level of visibility not witnessed since the Earth Day demonstrations of 1970. All the attention, which reached its apogee amid last summer's tidal wave of beach pollution and a drought and heat wave that scientists warned might mark the onset of the "greenhouse effect," seems to have finally elevated the issue to an unprecedented place on both the national and global policy agendas. President George Bush has proclaimed himself a Teddy Roosevelt–style environmentalist, endorsed European efforts to save the ozone layer and appointed William Reilly, head of the World Wildlife Fund/Conservation Foundation, to run his Environmental Protection Agency.

But at this moment of urgency and opportunity, a tension between the increasingly militant grass roots and the environmental establishment in Washington threatens to divide the movement. With Reilly inside the whale, the mainstream conservation organizations believe they are at last about to see a serious governmental commitment to saving the environment. But many local groups fear, with some cause, that the well-heeled organizations lobbying in Washington are too ready to compromise with both governmental agencies and corporate polluters.

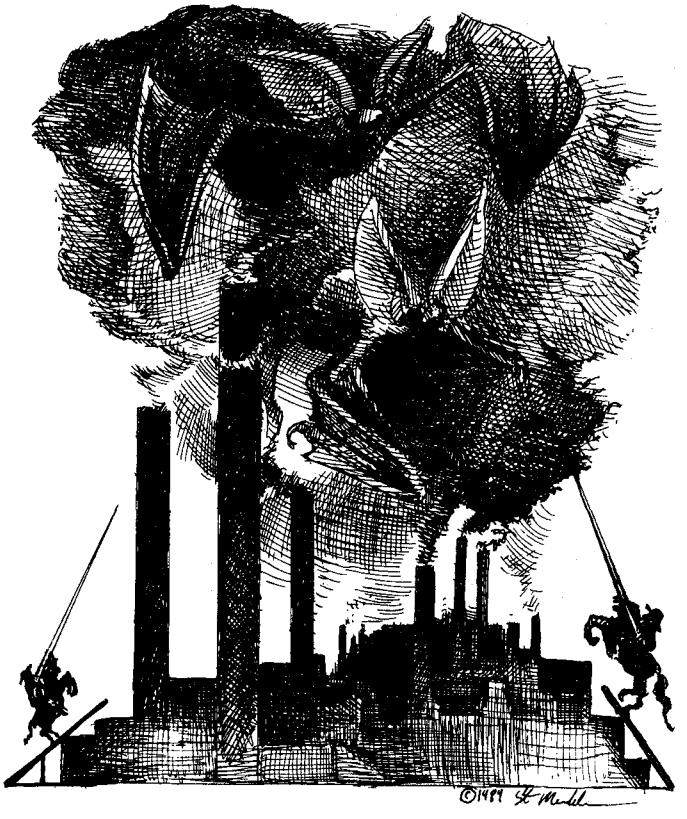
For thousands of men, women and children living hard by toxic waste sites or polluted rivers, the time for deals and the half measures they produce is long past. This is reflected in the growing number of mass demonstrations and even civil disobedience actions by desperate citizens plagued by unsafe air and drinking water. Last November, days after the national elections, hundreds of people marched for ten days along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, an eighty-mile stretch residents have dubbed "cancer alley" because of contamination from at least 136 petrochemical and other plants. Their demand: Reduce emissions and toxic waste to levels that will no longer threaten health.

On a weekend the same month, nearly 1,000 people from across California gathered in Los Angeles to protest the planned siting of a hazardous waste incinerator in an impoverished Latino neighborhood. Incinerators also raised hackles in Kansas in November, where 34-year-old Lauri Maddy—outraged by the lack of state concern about dangerous emissions from Wichita's Vulcan plant—handcuffed herself to a chair in Governor Mike Hayden's office. Her siege, accompanied by twenty supporters, lasted for four hours, until the Governor agreed to meet with her. Five days later, Vulcan canceled plans to build a second toxic waste incinerator, citing "the increased availability of E.P.A. approved incineration capacity" and "new cost estimates."

Last July, five South Carolina citizens who had been arrested for blocking hazardous waste trucks from dumping chemicals near their community's water supply were acquitted of civil disobedience charges by a Sumter County jury. Their plea of self-defense marked the first time that such a tactic had been used successfully by environmental activists since Sam Lovejoy was acquitted for sabotaging a 500-foot weather tower in 1974, an action that galvanized the antinuclear movement.

The efforts of small communities against polluters are no longer taking place in relative isolation from one another. Two national grass-roots groups—the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes and the National Toxics Campaign—are expanding rapidly, providing advice and organizing skills. Richard Grossman, a Washington-based author and activist, has begun bringing together antitoxics organizers from various regions for a series of regular meetings, each one followed by a demonstration targeting a local polluter. In February, Grossman took his crusade to a black neighborhood in Texarkana, Texas, that includes two contaminated sites on the Environmental Protection Agency's "Superfund" priority cleanup list. The protest concluded with a two-mile march of residents and community organizers from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Kansas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, California and Washington, D.C.

In New Market, Tennessee, the Highlander Center has



DRAWINGS BY STEVE MENDELSON

Dick Russell covers the environment for numerous national publications.

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initiated S.T.P. (Stop-the-Poisoning) Schools to train attendees from community groups around the nation. A coalition of environmental, farm, church and animal-rights groups, put together by Jeremy Rifkin, is planning four large-scale demonstrations in the United States and more in Europe on April 22, targeting producers of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons. It calls for a one-year phase-out of CFCs, a position much tougher than the European plan to cut CFC production 50 percent by the year 2000. There are Earth First! brigades intent on salvaging remaining wilderness areas by radical means (including, where necessary, spiking trees with nails to stop chainsaws and performing other acts of "ecotage"); increasingly militant animal rights advocates; small organizations banding together nationally against nuclear waste dumps and pesticides; and groups, sometimes under bioregional labels, forming to protect endangered watershed areas and restore native species.

Such diverse constituencies distrust the conservation/preservation view and legalistic approach that characterize the traditional environmentalism practiced by most of the major Washington-based organizations. And they question whether groups with corporate polluters on their boards can be effective advocates. (For example, Dean Buntrock, the chair of Waste Management Inc., the nation's biggest landfill operator and one with a dubious track record in many communities, sits on the National Wildlife Federation's board of directors.) Instead of more regulatory controls, many of the grass-roots groups are calling for a shift in direction to a prevention-based policy—one that would eliminate the worst pollutants at their source. As Greenpeace U.S.A.'s executive director, Peter Bahouth, argues, "Dealing with one chemical at a time and allowable 'parts per million' must give way to flat-out bans on whole classes of chemicals that are destroying the environment."

This has been a period of considerable soul-searching among the so-called Group of Ten in Washington.* Is Bush's commitment for real, or simply a rhetorical attempt to co-opt them? Can the polluter corporations be brought to the bargaining table, or are filing lawsuits and lobbying for stricter government regulations still their best available tools? "At this point, the national groups are uncertain about what the appropriate strategies are," says Michael Oppenheimer, a scientist who works for the Environmental Defense Fund. "They weren't ready for this kind of attention to be thrown on environmentalists practically overnight." Oppenheimer worries that the national groups will get mesmerized by the possibilities of expanding their influence in Washington "and forget where their strength comes from." Ideally, the role of the big organizations is to translate locally inspired energy into political results. But scientist and author Barry Commoner sees these groups developing "a congenital arrogance that they are in charge" and, now that one of their own people is in the Administration, fears they will lose their backbone.

* The National Wildlife Federation (N.W.F.), Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund (E.D.F.), Natural Resources Defense Council (N.R.D.C.), National Audubon Society, Wilderness Society, Environmental Policy Institute, Defenders of Wildlife, National Parks and Conservation Association and Izaak Walton League of America.

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PANTHEON

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Tensions between national and local groups will inevitably come to a head over how to relate to Reilly's E.P.A. [see Viveca Novak, page 406]. "Here's what I think is going to happen," says Ralph Nader, whose Public Citizen organization has become increasingly involved in toxic-waste-related issues. "Reilly will bring in the established groups, [defusing] challenge from the outside. This means there will be a lot of private negotiation under E.P.A. auspices between N.R.D.C., E.D.F., National Wildlife and others and the corporations . . . as well as between E.P.A. and the polluters, developing elaborate and essentially nonenforceable agreements. This will leave a big vacuum for local groups, justifiably outraged about this situation, to become more militant."

Even Jay Hair, president of the powerful National Wildlife Federation, sees it coming. The N.W.F.'s $70 million annual budget and 600 Washington staff members dwarf most other groups. "I've never seen such a latent level of anger out there about what's happening to the environment," says Hair. But he and other Group of Ten leaders remain geared to a reasonable course. Though Hair advocates "a major shift in the way our society behaves" and considers civil disobedience "an important dynamic," he thinks the signals from the new Administration are "very positive." The Natural Resources Defense Council, one of the better Washington-oriented groups, has adopted a wait-and-see attitude. John Adams, its executive director, says he wants to give Bush a chance "to turn out to be a 1989 version of Teddy Roosevelt." But Adams's initial ebullience in the aftermath of a postelection breakfast meeting Bush held with environmental leaders has lately given way to the fear that "we're off to a terrible start with some of his appointments."

These have included Manuel Lujan Jr., a longtime Representative from New Mexico who had an abysmal environmental voting record in the House, for Secretary of the Interior; retired Adm. James D. Watkins, a former nuclear submarine commander, to run the Department of Energy; and John Sununu, an advocate of nuclear power while Governor of New Hampshire, as White House chief of staff.

That leaves only Reilly at the E.P.A., who wins praise from Hair, Adams and other of his peers but who was also applauded by the Chemical Manufacturers Association "for focusing on solutions to environmental problems, not on polemics." Indeed, in addition to the chemical manufacturers, the roster of corporate donors to the Conservation Foundation, presided over by Reilly since 1973, includes Dow Chemical, Monsanto, Du Pont, Exxon, Union Carbide, General Electric, Ciba-Geigy and Shell Oil. Since the foundation's merger with the World Wildlife Fund in 1985, the joint organization has tripled its membership to 600,000 and seen its budget rise to $35 million. And with Reilly at the helm after the merger, the World Wildlife Fund established ties to fund education programs with Chevron, whose refinery operation not far from San Francisco Bay has been criticized for years by local activists.

Reilly, along with Frederic Krupp, executive director of the Environmental Defense Fund, is in the vanguard of "third-wave environmentalism." Third-wavers believe that

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market-based incentives for environmental protection are the next step after the first wave, the early 1900s' conservation of forest land and wildlife, and the second wave, the 1970s' landmark air and water legislation. A strategy that, in Krupp's words, "harnesses the profit motive and introduces new incentives to get businesses to do the right thing in the first place" is envisioned as preferable to burdening industry with additional regulations and expenses.

Hazardous Choice

Those inclined to applaud William Reilly's appointment as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency might consider the recent involvement of the Conservation Foundation (C.F.), which he headed, in an industry-sponsored attempt to defang the "Superfund" law. Aimed at making polluters pay cleanup costs, Superfund has been hindered by hostile E.P.A. administrations, lack of adequate funding and industry attacks since it was passed in 1980: To date, only twenty-seven sites have been cleaned up, though nearly 1,200 are on or have been proposed for the priority list. Nevertheless, some aspects of Superfund are working—for instance its strict "joint and several" liability standard, which holds responsible practically anyone connected with a hazardous site. The stringent standard has spurred voluntary cleanups and waste minimization efforts, but industry would love to be rid of it.

Yet industry failed to weaken the law during its five-year, $8.5 billion reauthorization in 1986, and hazardous waste producers and their insurers regrouped as the Coalition on Superfund for a renewed assault. Seeking credibility, the group brought in former two-time E.P.A. chief William Ruckelshaus to head up a multimillion-dollar "study" of the law. Last spring it hired three environmental research groups—Resources for the Future, the Environmental Law Institute and the C.F., under Reilly—to scope out areas to re-evaluate. The C.F. was responsible for the overview plan for a fee of $20,000, with the prospect of more to come.

Curiously enough, while the scoping papers were in the works, the E.P.A. decided to do its own $2.5 million study of Superfund and commissioned a planning document from Reilly's C.F. Environmentalists and Congressional staff members who began looking into the parallel efforts found that the line between the industry study and the E.P.A. project was hard to distinguish. For example, they found in both cases that the C.F. suggested the effects of Superfund on industry's "profitability" should be rethought. And they were astonished when C.F. vice president J. Clarence Davies asked if anyone would mind if his group took money from industry to supplement its E.P.A. payment in the government's study.

How did the E.P.A. wind up, as one environmentalist put it, "putting together the Ruckelshaus agenda"? And why was the C.F. sitting in the catbird seat no matter who was paying? Both Ruckelshaus and the E.P.A. deny that the coalition asked the agency to do its study. But the coincidences prompt suspicion. According to Ruckelshaus and officials at the agency and at the C.F., E.P.A. Administrator Lee Thomas called William Reilly, then C.F.'s president, in May about the agency study. Ruckelshaus says Reilly then called him, asking "if there was any way to coordinate it with what we were doing." Ruckelshaus offered his help to Thomas, who was once his subordinate at the E.P.A. "I encouraged our coalition to support [the E.P.A.]," he says. A 1987 internal memorandum of the Coalition on Superfund shows that Thomas was well aware of industry's intentions: "Ruckelshaus mentioned a conversation he had had with Lee Thomas wherein Mr. Thomas expressed interest in the group we are establishing to 'get rid of joint and several liability.'"

Congressional objections and the refusal of four major environmental groups to join an E.P.A. steering committee for the study scuttled the agency's—and the C.F.'s—big plans. The shared concern among those protesting the study was that the agency shouldn't be questioning the law itself, but should focus only on why it wasn't being implemented. After Bush announced the Reilly nomination in December, the C.F. dropped out and the study was put on hold.

But environmentalists are left with two fears. One is that Reilly may be more status quo than new blood at the E.P.A. His foundation was a popular E.P.A. contractor under both Ruckelshaus and Thomas, and stood to make over $1 million from the aborted study. Ruckelshaus is on the board of the C.F. and was one of Bush's two major environmental advisers during the presidential campaign. In a sense Reilly was practically an heir apparent.

More troubling to some, though, is that Reilly could work for industry, then do much the same work for the E.P.A., intertwine funding from the two and apparently think he could step away clean. Most think he is more naïve than nefarious. Under Reilly, the C.F. built a reputation for bringing adversaries to the same table. But as Administrator of the E.P.A., "Reilly's challenge will be to stop negotiating with polluters and start enforcing the law," points out Daniel Becker, a legislative counsel for Environmental Action.

VIVECA NOVAK

Viveca Novak is senior writer at Common Cause Magazine *in Washington, D.C.*

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To a limited degree, third-wave environmentalism has a certain logic. For example, the E.D.F. convinced California's Pacific Gas & Electric that a package of alternative energy sources (including wind and solar) and conservation investments could make coal and nuclear power plants planned by the utility unnecessary, save much of the projected $20 billion cost and generate increased profits without adding to environmental ills. But this market approach often includes calls for a system of "corporate permits," under which a polluter that earns credits for cleaning up more than the law requires in one area could then exceed permissible standards in another, or even sell such credits to another company.

Such notions echo the Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership* report, which favors "market mechanisms to induce individual firms to find the most efficient means to stay within the [pollution] limits." The market can be trusted, writes John Baden, a leading spokesman for two conservative think tanks and probably the biggest name on the environmental right, because environmental quality has become a highly valued commodity, "like gourmet food, classical music and foreign travel." If Bush's record as chair of President Reagan's White House Task Force on Regulatory Relief is any indication, the third-wave approach will make headway in the next four years. The task force, whose stated aim was to bring cost-benefit analysis to Federal regulation, ended up providing relief only to corporate polluters. It intervened numerous times on industry's behalf to delay the implementation of E.P.A. requirements mandated by Congress pertaining to hazardous waste and chemical pretreatment, leaded gasoline and other automobile pollutants, warnings on dangerous workplace chemicals and worker-exposure testing.

The third-wave strategy will inevitably spark opposition from the N.R.D.C. and the more militant grass-roots organizations. John Adams thinks that allowing companies to compromise on pollution by saying, "If you pay here, you can pollute there" is "absolutely the wrong way to go." Militant leaders like Richard Grossman see the third wave as compelling evidence that at least some of the environmental "elite" have become enmeshed in an abstract world of appeasement just when the struggle is reaching critical mass. "The fact is, we are all losing the war," says Grossman. "Despite a lot of well-intentioned people, actions and energy, the amount of poisons being produced is greater than ever. And the polluters are richer and more politically influential than they've ever been."

Still, local pressure has had important results. "No new hazardous waste dump sites have been built in America since 1978," says Lois Gibbs, who founded the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes after leading a local effort that year to resettle residents of Love Canal, near Buffalo. "Not because they're illegal," she notes, "but because people have lobbied at the grass roots." Likewise, says John O'Connor of the National Toxics Campaign, "allocations for the Superfund program actually increased more than 540 percent under Reagan because we had organizations in over 300 Congressional districts putting it to their legislators." It was primarily the citizens' movement that got Congress to pass right-to-know legislation giving activists a handle on the hitherto private activities of the chemical industry.

All this is not to disparage the well-meaning efforts of the Group of Ten, many of which maintain field offices outside Washington and have local chapters as vocal in toxics and land and sea preservation battles as anyone. Without their staff members in the courtrooms and Congressional halls, the environment would surely be in even worse shape. Without ecological research arms like the Worldwatch and World Resources Institutes, policy-makers would have far less scientific information about the ramifications of global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, ocean pollution, rain forest destruction and more. Indeed, nearly all the big ecology organizations experienced membership surges during the Reagan era and are now able to commit more resources to the global battle.

In their concentration on regulatory strategies, internal politics and fund-raising, though, the major organizations have lost touch with their lifeblood—the surge of passionate, even desperate, commitment at the grass roots. If George Bush's statements and appointments are merely a ploy to keep the Group of Ten in a holding pattern, obscuring the urgent need for sweeping change, the present danger is that the Washington-based groups will render themselves impotent and obsolete. For the real third wave is not their prerogative but belongs to the people, people like Lauri Maddy, the protester who handcuffed herself to the chair in the Kansas Governor's office. "The bigger 'movement' may be

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—*New York Review*, Oct. 27, 1988

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caught up in making enough money to cover their budgets," she says, "but nobody pays us for forty hours a week, or even eighty. Because most of us living in high-chemical-impact areas came to fighting this out of self-preservation. We lived it, we feel it, and we still hurt." □

URUGUAY—I

Torture, Memory And Justice

CYNTHIA BROWN AND
ROBERT K. GOLDMAN

In the spontaneous street celebrations that filled downtown Montevideo last December 19, two Uruguayans who had never met found themselves shaking hands with each other, grinning. "I congratulate you!" said one. "No, I congratulate *you*!" said the other. Around them, people were hugging, shouting and giving way to tears.

The congratulations were well deserved. After two years of an uphill struggle, a citizens' movement had succeeded in forcing the government to recognize the breadth of opposition to impunity for military violators of human rights. Still relatively fresh from twelve horror-filled years of military rule, which ended in 1985, Uruguayans across the political spectrum had effectively challenged not only their past tormentors but their current, elected President and most of their Congress. The peaceful, patient campaign relied on the long history of civic activism in this republic of 3 million citizens, and used a constitutional provision unique in Latin America that permits the calling of a referendum to decide the fate of an unpopular law.

With an economic decline in the late 1960s, Uruguay's liberal political consensus deteriorated and the armed Movement of National Liberation, or Tupamaros, emerged. By the early 1970s the Tupamaros' tactics included bombings, armed attacks against government agents and assassinations. When police failed to wipe them out, Uruguay's civilian government offered the task to the military. In the bloody campaign that followed, the armed forces invoked the doctrine of national security, finding a mission that would elevate them from a marginal social force into saviors of Western civilization.

The military saw the Tupamaros as merely one symptom of a pervasive malignancy threatening the nation—Communism infiltrating through the permissiveness of liberal democracy. Thus, although they claimed to have completely destroyed the Tupamaros by early 1973, the armed forces did not withdraw from politics. Instead they convinced the civilian President, Juan María Bordaberry, to dissolve Congress on June 27, 1973, and began to attack as "subversive" anyone who even peacefully opposed them.

In the next twelve years the military regime fired 30,000 civil servants for ideological reasons, prohibited all political and trade-union activity, closed twenty-eight daily newspapers and weeklies permanently and censored the remaining press. Employment depended on the military's classification of an individual as A, B or C, depending on political loyalty, with C status amounting to a blacklist; citizens could be blacklisted or jailed for having signed political petitions for liberal or leftist causes years before 1973. Thousands of suspected "subversives" were tried without due process by military courts, while hundreds of others were detained without charge or trial for months or years.

To flee was not necessarily to escape. Uruguayan security forces are known to have "disappeared" 127 Uruguayan refugees in Argentina in 1976, the year the generals came to power there. And between 1973 and 1979 one in every 500 Uruguayans was imprisoned for political reasons and one in every fifty detained for interrogation—one of the highest proportions in the world. Along with a repertoire of physical torture by now familiar—electric shock, submersion in tanks of water mixed with vomit, blood and urine—the Uruguayan military experimented with scientifically refined psychological torture aimed at breaking down the personalities of prisoners, some of whom were confined for more than a decade.

To improve its international image and pave the way for "limited democracy," the regime held a plebiscite in November 1980 on a draft Constitution that would have institutionalized military control over future civilian governments. To their amazement, having spent $20 million on a media campaign for the "yes" vote, the armed forces were rejected by the impressive margin of 58 to 42 percent. That precedent is relevant to the current proreferendum campaign. After five years of negotiations and an election campaign that excluded most leading politicians, Julio María Sanguinetti of the Colorado Party was elected President in March 1985.

Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, the presidential candidate of the other major party, the Blancos, spent the election in prison, banned from participating in a contest he probably would have won. The Sanguinetti government moved quickly to promote reconciliation, freeing the remaining political prisoners, reinstating thousands of civil servants fired by the military regime and promising to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations.

But it was soon clear that the government was under pressure, as human rights cases began moving through the civilian courts and up to 170 military officers were implicated. The Uruguayan military, not defeated in war like its Argentine counterpart, had withdrawn from government intact and with one of the army's strongmen, Gen. Hugo Medina, as the new government's Defense Minister. To the end the military enjoyed the support of the Reagan Administration.

Sanguinetti's dilemma became apparent when, in August

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World Statement

From the International Committee for the Defense of Salman Rushdie and his Publishers (USA)

On February 14th the Ayatollah Khomeini called on all Muslims to seek out and execute Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*, and those involved in its publication worldwide.

We, the undersigned, insofar as we defend the right to freedom of opinion and expression as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declare that we also are involved in the publication.

We are involved whether we approve the contents of the book or not. We appreciate the distress the book has aroused and deeply regret the loss of life associated with the ensuing conflict.

We call upon world opinion to support the right of all people to express their ideas and beliefs and to discuss them with their critics on the basis of mutual tolerance, free from censorship, intimidation and violence.

We request all world leaders to continue to repudiate the threats made against Salman Rushdie and those involved in his publication worldwide, and to take firm action to ensure that these threats are withdrawn.

Thousands of literary figures around the world have put their names to this statement. These are some of them:

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1986, the government introduced a draft amnesty for the military. It was defeated by opposition parties, including the Blancos and the left-of-center Frente Amplio (Broad Front) coalition. But when military officers were called to appear before the courts, Defense Minister Medina ordered them to defy judicial authority. Sanguinetti, citing the need to avoid a constitutional crisis, engineered Congressional approval of a new amnesty on December 22, 1986, just hours before the officers were due to appear in court. The new law terminated the state's power to prosecute and punish military and police personnel responsible for abuses between 1973 and 1985. It also empowered the executive to order cases already before the courts dismissed, including those involving disappearances, if they were committed by police or military personnel "for political reasons or in exercise of their official duties and on superior orders." (It did mandate government investigation into disappearances, but the official inquiry ended with a special military prosecutor claiming there had been no armed forces involvement and closing down further investigation.)

Polls showed more than 70 percent of Uruguayans disapproved of the law, reflecting the general view that the Congress had acted with a gun to its head. And the day after the bill passed, a group of influential citizens began to organize for its annulment. The National Pro-Referendum Commission, as the group named itself, comprises well-known figures in politics, human rights and the law, including even a Colorado Congressman and a representative of the right-wing Civic Union Party. The commission also drew on a network of contacts with hundreds of grass-roots, labor and human rights activists around the country, who formed into local committees. In keeping with Article 79 of the Constitution, they planned to gather the signatures of 25 percent of the electorate, within a year, on petitions demanding a referendum on the law. The number of signatures required was 555,701.

The referendum movement channeled disillusionment into hopes for a peaceful, legal rejection of impunity and a possibility of national healing. The campaign was strongest in Montevideo, where half the population lives, but organizers found that many who supported the referendum, both in the capital and in the countryside, hesitated or refused to sign petitions because of the previous experience of retroactive punishment under the military; what was legal today might be cause for reprisals tomorrow. Nonetheless, by assuring people that their signatures would be held in confidence, first by the commission and later by the Electoral Court that would review their validity, the organizers easily met the December 1987 deadline and handed in 634,702 signatures. Referendum supporters ended the year wearing buttons that happily proclaimed, "I signed." The commission believed that the race was won.

But the polemic surrounding the referendum only grew more intense after the signatures were passed to the Electoral Court. President Sanguinetti, backed by his Colorado Party and a majority of the Blancos, made no secret of his opposition to the campaign and accused its organizers of seeking revenge and looking backward. Defense Minister Medina publicly called the referendum's supporters "mentally ill" [see Eduardo Galeano, page 411]. Progovernment legal scholars argued that the referendum was legally pointless, since overturning the law would mean not annulment but derogation. Proreferendum scholars denied this. Colorados and conservative Blancos accused the Frente Amplio of using the referendum for political advantage in anticipation of the 1989 elections. Proponents of the referendum accused the government and military of attempting to intimidate the public.

More important, the politically appointed Electoral Court began to invalidate signatures by the thousands. Court functionaries were nullifying them for tiny irregularities—a correction in an identification number on the petition, the writing of one figure larger than others, the use of a different-colored ink in the signature than in the I.D. number. Some 20,000 signatures were invalidated for such trivial reasons in January 1988, and only after a protracted dispute did the court decide (and the National Pro-Referendum Commission concede) to place those entries "in suspense" for later decision. Meanwhile, court challenges by Colorado delegates threw many more in suspense. Then, in June, the court revealed that electoral sheets containing some 30,000 signatures were "missing."

In August political tensions mounted further as Defense Minister Medina ordered two naval officers arrested for signing referendum petitions, on the ground that political activity other than voting is prohibited for active military and police personnel. While debate ignited over the leak of signatories' names and over the appropriateness of Medina's charges, two of Uruguay's most prominent civilians—both of them known to support the referendum—fell victim to the checking procedures: Retired Gen. Líber Seregni, leader

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of the Frente Amplio and a former presidential contender, learned that his signature was in suspense, and Carlos Julio Pereyra, a Blanco senator, learned that his had been invalidated.

Electoral Court president Renan Rodríguez, an elderly Colorado member, was clearly irritated by these controversies. He told an Americas Watch delegation in early December that the court did not "want to decide" whether military personnel had the right to sign referendum petitions, because of the matter's "political complexity." With some agitation he declared that, in his opinion, the signers of the petitions were all "sympathizers of the Tupamaros," thus consigning more than one-fourth of the electorate to the status of urban guerrillas. Vice President Enrique Tarigo, in an earlier interview with Americas Watch representatives, had claimed that the entire referendum campaign could be traced to the Communists (now a legal party) and that signatures had been obtained by coercion. Many politicians believe that the official stridency actually strengthened the proreferendum campaign among undecided citizens.

In the end, some 36,000 signatures, those in suspense, were to make the difference between the referendum drive's reaching the necessary level of approved signatures or failing after a two-year effort. Pleading shortness of time, the Electoral Court stipulated that over a three-day period, December 17-19, all 36,000 people (their names made public, in violation of earlier understandings) would have to ratify their signatures at 100 special tables set up through the country. Disavowal of signatures would not do; the court required positive confirmation, a tough challenge for the National Pro-Referendum Commission. Disgusted with the court's conduct and having withdrawn its delegates after the Seregni/Pereyra episode, the commission debated whether to pursue the drive without what it considered sufficient guarantees of court neutrality in making the final count.

But the referendum's organizers decided to try once more and managed to track down about two-thirds of the signatories, evidence that they could in fact be located and consulted. The final days were full of drama: a pregnant Montevideo woman permitted to sign in an ambulance taking her to the hospital; a man on a fishing vacation located by a special radio announcement. On the third day, when it was announced that the drive had reached its goal, office workers tossed shredded paper from windows and Montevideo's main avenue became a festival of honking horns, applause and dancing. The referendum vote itself is now expected in April, seven months before the presidential elections. Increasingly, Blanco politicians see it as a chance to criticize the Colorado Party during an election year, and a Blanco shift could increase the referendum's chances of success. Credible observers in Montevideo do not believe that annulling the amnesty would provoke a military coup. Whether the armed forces would answer if called before the courts, however, is a matter of intense speculation.

The new U.S. Administration should not be deaf to the message of these past two years in Uruguay—as its predecessor appeared to be. Guatemala and El Salvador have given amnesty to their militaries, with U.S. approval, and the result has been a dramatic increase in human rights abuses that belies civilian authority. All Uruguay's neighbors in the southern cone of Latin America have recent experience of military rule, and all, in one way or another, confront collective memories of suffering for which there has been no reparation. Perhaps no reparation can be enough. But memory merits at least some measure of legal justice, and whatever its outcome, Uruguay's referendum is a symbol of that memory, vindicated by the hundreds of thousands who, remembering, signed. □

URUGUAY—II

Sign on the Invisible Line

EDUARDO GALEANO

In order to safeguard the inequality of citizens before justice, the Electoral Court of Uruguay has, in tortoiselike fashion, re-examined the signatures of those who called for a referendum. An entire year was needed for this laborious search to find hairs in the milk and a five-legged cat. The court succeeded in nullifying or suspending nearly 100,000 signatures, but in the end, despite all its efforts, there will be a referendum in Uruguay. The people of Uruguay will be able to declare their opinions on the Law of Expiry on the Exercise of Punitive Claims by the State, the law that offends language and humiliates democracy.

The Defense Minister, Gen. Hugo Medina, declared "insane" those of us who signed in opposition to this law, which grants immunity to state terrorism. He did not lack reasons. The signatures rejected by the court reveal the following insanities:

The insanity of not signing in exactly the same way. The most notorious case is that of Líber Seregni, a leader of the opposition. The "S" in his signatures did not coincide. In the many years following his inscription in the civil register, his signature had changed, and so had he. This proves that he is alive: an unpardonable madness. Another case, not famous yet very revealing, is that of one of the janitors of the Electoral Court. He was right there, in the office where he works, at the moment of the verification of his signature:

"Mariño," said the official. "Did you sign?"

"Yes," answered Mariño.

"The signatures do not coincide," said the official.

"But it's my signature," said Mariño.

"I am very sorry," said the official, "but they do not coincide."

In vain, Mariño insisted, crying, "But I am me!" and the official gave him a look as if to say, "You thought you were

Eduardo Galeano is a Uruguayan writer and author of the trilogy Memory of Fire *(Pantheon). This article was translated by Tracey Hill.*

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so clever, young man, but you haven't fooled us."

The insanity of signing in exactly the same way. Forewarned about the unpleasant situation of Seregni and of the janitor of the court and of many thousands more, I falsified my own signature, making it identical to that of thirty years past. But I was careful to make sure that it wasn't too perfect, because if the signature doesn't match it won't do, yet if it matches too closely it's also useless, for it indicates bad intentions.

The insanity of others' errors. More than 8,000 signatures were nullified, among them that of Senator Carlos Julio Pereyra, another leader of the opposition, due to errors committed by the court employees who transcribed the information onto the verification cards. There were many protests about this, which is not at all surprising. To fail to recognize other people's errors is a clear symptom of abnormality.

The insanity of others' slowness. The signatures of 3,000 young people were nullified because the documents required to register them as citizens had not yet completed their journey through the bureaucratic labyrinth of the Electoral Court.

The insanity of having learned to write. Also nullified were the signatures of all those who had registered with a fingerprint and subsequently committed the insane act of becoming literate.

The insanity of not having learned to write. Also nullified were the many signatures of the illiterate who had remained so, due to the suspicion that they had falsified their fingerprints.

Other insanities duly punished:

§ Offering information not solicited.

§ Writing the numbers of one's credentials with a different color ink than that of the signature.

§ Writing over a letter or a number.

§ Writing one number higher than the others.

§ Writing the information from one's credentials on the wrong line.

§ Dirtying the page with erasures or stray marks.

§ Putting down the number of one's prior credentials.

All of these deliriums lead to a greater alienation:

The insanity of ignoring the fact that appearances are deceiving. The sun—to offer one example—appears to revolve around the earth, yet nevertheless there exist well-founded suspicions that in fact it does not. And, in like manner, the work of the court may well seem fraudulent, in that it is a legitimate procedure aimed at hindering public opinion, always irresponsible, from expressing itself.

But the people are ungrateful, like the women in tangos and the butlers in crime novels. The court summoned one-third of those whose signatures had been rejected, granting them one weekend during which they could confirm their signatures. And, by some miracle of dignity, which is the most insane custom of this land of madness, those summoned confirmed what they had signed. These lunatics defied the intimidations that threatened them with the loss of their jobs, with incarceration or with the addition of their names to the blacklist of some future dictatorship.

We Uruguayans have thus committed the insanity of believing in the dictionary. Democracy, according to the dictionary, is the exercise of sovereignty by the people. And we have committed the insanity of believing that a military uniform does not grant immunity, a belief that constitutes a clear negation of the evidence, because the government has shown us that yes, in fact, it does grant this privilege. We have also committed the insanity of believing that within a democracy the military does not rule, yet another clear negation of the evidence. The law that consecrates the uniformed who murdered, kidnapped, tortured and raped during the dictatorship expressly invokes the "logic of events," or, to put it another way, the tickle produced when the point of the sword grazes the throat.

These signatures, which would be proportionally equivalent to 6 million signatures in Argentina, or 9 million in Spain, express a pathological obstinacy. We refuse to accept the impotence of civil influence as an inevitable and sad destiny, in these lands where democracy has been condemned to the penalty of amnesia and to slavery by debt.

For in Latin America, as is well known, the good sense of the system obliges one to believe that that which is moral is immoral, to prevent reality from becoming unreal. In the kingdom of opposites the civil servants do not serve. Politicians speak but say nothing. Banks lend money to bankers. The media, sources of information, misinform. Schools teach us to be ignorant. Judges condemn the victims. Police do not fight crime because they are too busy committing it. The military wages a heroic war against its countrymen, and the civilians govern but do not rule. □

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'IF YOU FIND A LIBERAL . . .

. . . Write Me a Letter About It'

DAVID CORN

The cold war is waning. Mikhail Gorbachev is waxing. Ronald Reagan is clearing brush. The *contras* are sitting on their hands. The Russians are gone from Afghanistan. George Bush is backing a military spending freeze. Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden are splitting. What's a conservative to do?

Several hundred right-wing activists recently gathered at the Washington Hilton for three days to ponder that very question at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference. Compared with its previous gatherings, this one was less spirited. There were the predictable tirades aimed at the liberal media and "renegade Marxists" in Congress, the usual warnings about the Communist threat and the familiar hand-wringing about the assault on traditional values. Delegates purchased Oliver North key rings, wore buttons with slogans like "Freedom Works. Why Don't You?" and stocked up on literature, including the National Rifle Association's brochure "Semi-Auto Firearms: The Citizen's Choice," and a comic book that trashed the American Civil Liberties Union. But something was missing.

For the first time in years, the faithful were without a preeminent leader. In the beginning there was Barry Goldwater. Then Goldwater begat Reagan. As White House hopeful and then as President, Reagan spiritually presided over the annual conferences, which started in 1973. And Reagan begat. . . . Well, that's the problem. The past two CPACs were dominated by the jockeying of those who hoped to be accepted as the rightful heir: Pat Robertson, Jack Kemp, Bob Dole, Pat Buchanan. That gave the gatherings an edge, with Reagan still around to provide a sense of security and continuity. But none of the contenders won out. Instead, the conservatives were stuck with Bush, who had the gall to snub last year's session.

At the recent meeting, Bush believers and Bush skeptics clashed. Members of the Republican establishment asked the activists to give Bush a chance. Senator Trent Lott noted that sometimes "we devour our own," and "should not be subdividing ourselves." In a rambling speech—one conservative journalist charitably pronounced it "stream of consciousness"—Jack Kemp, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, predicted Bush would bolster the Reagan Revolution. (Kemp, whose subject seemed to be opportunity in America, went on to talk about how to strengthen the Mexican peso.) Speaking of the Administration, Republican Party chair Lee Atwater asked the crowd, "If you find a liberal, write me a letter about it."

Not everyone in the audience bought the line. James Bieber of Young Americans for Freedom challenged Atwater on CPAC's first day. "I will write you a letter and name the liberal as your boss," Bieber said. He cited Bush's nomination of Louis Sullivan to head the Department of Health and Human Services and the President's decisions to freeze the Pentagon's budget and not request military aid for the *contras*. At a banquet the next night, Bieber and other YAFers walked out because Sullivan, whose antiabortion credentials are suspect, was present. "Can you believe all these lapdogs for the White House?" Bieber griped.

Bush backers sought to play down the ideological divisions by emphasizing tactical concerns, notably reapportionment and race. After the 1990 census, the House of Representatives will be reapportioned. Atwater and other Republicans see this as an opportunity for the G.O.P. to make gains in the House. They also want to siphon away some of the Democrats' black supporters. Atwater and Kemp contended that conservative policies—tough anticrime measures and free enterprise zones, for example—can win over minority voters, and they pledged to lead a conservative charge into the barrios and inner cities.

Not all attendees were as eager to reach out. At the opening press conference, one delegate anxiously asked David Keene, chair of the American Conservative Union (A.C.U.), about Jesse Jackson's meeting with Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. Such coziness, the delegate said, was "a red flag for people like me in the movement." Undaunted, Keene noted that the A.C.U. opposed the campaign of David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klansman elected to the Louisiana State Legislature. This prompted another delegate to observe that much of what Duke says "all of us in this room have said at one time. What's so objectionable? The people have spoken."

Even as Trent Lott made the pitch that blacks should take a new look at the G.O.P., he couldn't bring himself to criticize Duke Republicans. "People have a right to vote," he said, "and once they vote you have to respect that." Another reminder that not all right-wingers have their eyes on the prize of black votes could be found at the booth of Accuracy in Academia, a spinoff of Reed Irvine's Accuracy in Media. On display was Home Rulette, a board game based on "what happens when a coalition of welfare entrepreneurs, black supremacists, radical homosexuals & common criminals take over the local government of the national capital city of a modern superpower." It goes for $30.

Gorbachev was the target of more denouncements than anyone else—with the possible exception of House Speaker Jim Wright. "The American people are being lulled asleep" by *glasnost* and *perestroika*, warned the always vigilant Senator Jesse Helms. "The Soviets are cleaning our clocks again." He decried Western nations and banks that provide the Soviet Union with credit. Let's name names, Helms declared. "Who are the businessmen? Which are the corporations engaged in this?"

Many at the conference fretted about the future of the Reagan doctrine. On one panel, Jack Wheeler, director of the Freedom Research Foundation, called for the creation of a Liberation Support Agency, to institutionalize backing for resistance movements. With much pleasure, he reported that Fidel Castro is dying of lung cancer and that Renamo,

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the guerrilla force in Mozambique that is so brutal nobody else would embrace it, is "doing very, very well." Howard Phillips, chair of Conservative Caucus Inc., criticized Bush on the Namibian peace accord, which he termed a sellout of Jonas Savimbi and his Angolan guerrilla group, Unita.

While the conservatives held fast to the notion of an Evil Empire, mujahedeen rubbed elbows with *contras*. No pipe dream was too crazy. Delegate Tony Pivac, a Croatian nationalist, urged conservatives to call for a cutoff of all Western funds to Yugoslavia. Jardo Muekalia, Unita's chief representative in the United States, requested that right-wingers use their influence to make sure Unita continues to receive assistance. Enrique Bermúdez, one of the chief military commanders of the *contras*, suggested that conservatives help the rebels obtain arms left behind by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. He also pledged that if the Central American peace process fails and the United States refuses to re-arm the *contras*, he will lead small guerrilla bands against the Sandinistas. Juri Yarim-Agaev, a Russian dissident émigré, wondered why it was that "the conservative movement never made any significant attempt to help freedom fighters inside the citadel of Communism," the Soviet Union. "Sometimes," he added, with some insight, "I feel conservatives don't want Communism to fall in the Soviet Union because this devil is necessary for the political religion of the movement."

As always, the internal subversive threat was everywhere. Steven Powell, the right's leading conspiracy theorist, accused the Institute for Policy Studies of being the American equivalent of the British espionage ring run by Kim Philby. Herbert Romerstein, a U.S.I.A. official, complained that nobody pays attention anymore to the U.S. Communist Party. With alarm, he claimed the anti-Bork "grass-roots effort was aided and abetted by C.P., U.S.A." Phyllis Schlafly assailed radical feminists who support child care programs for trying to place children "under government control." Delegate Stephen Rosen, who works for the Defense Department, called for legislation to prohibit lesbians from using artificial insemination. Reed Irvine made much of the admission of A. Kent MacDougall, the former *Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times* reporter who recently disclosed he was secretly a socialist while he worked at those papers.

Many AIDS-obsessed participants last year aimed their wrath at homosexuals, but this year there was little discussion of the disease. Instead, the scourge of drugs has become the number one social enemy. Rachel Ehrenfeld, a Freedom House fellow, suggested that the drug epidemic in the United States was the result of a Soviet-masterminded and Cuban-executed conspiracy. The delegates greeted warmly a uniformed Lieut. Gen. Stephen Olmstead, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Policy and Enforcement, who loudly advocated zero tolerance: "Random testing is an honor. I like to be random-tested. It tells me I'm clean."

Credit John Beckett, chairman of the board of Intercessors for America, a group that advocates praying to achieve policy results, with identifying the ultimate threat. He distributed a series of graphs showing that test scores plummeted, suicide rates skyrocketed, sexually transmitted diseases increased and violent crime rose after school prayer was banned in 1963. "Nature may abhor a vacuum," he explained, "but Satan loves one."

If anyone could go *mano a mano* with Satan, it would be Oliver North. The former marine gave the final sermon of the conference. Dressed in a well-tailored business suit, North was witty, engaging and fanatical. His watchword was "faithfulness," as he called for strict adherence to God and country. He scorned "our great intellectual and media and political elites" who embrace Gorbachev. His rhetoric soared: "Liberty . . . means that the government has a responsibility to promote the general welfare, not to provide welfare to the general public." He evangelized, calling on the crowd to be "faithful to the values and ideals of our Founding Fathers." With great emotion, he compared the *contras* to George Washington's troops at Valley Forge. He gave the crowd what it wanted and then quickly left, declining to sign autographs. Delegates shouted and waved posters proclaiming, "We Love Ollie." Baskets were passed to collect donations for his defense. In the throng departing the hall, someone said of North's antagonists, "They're trying to crucify him."

Clearly, the conservative movement has a spiritual leader if not an elected one. The mythology surrounding North is that while he served in the White House he had a father-son relationship with the Old Man. North's defense is that he followed the Word of Reagan. When his trials are over, when he's tan, rested and free of the law, North, always faithful, may well be ready once again to lead. If he is, future CPACs might well turn into revivals for North's holy crusade. That would not displease the grass-roots conservative activists who await the next Reagan. □

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This issue raises serious questions about the U.S. role in the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007. David Pearson's study argues that U.S. authorities at the highest level knew the airliner was off course much earlier than they have admitted and that the questions raised by the official versions of the story can only be resolved by a Congressional inquiry. *(August 18/25, 1984)*

K.A.L. 007: Unanswered Questions

This issue updates the ground-breaking K.A.L. story from the year before. David Pearson, John Keppel and David Corn analyze new Japanese radar data, examine a Nation Institute-sponsored review, by aviation experts, of the final airliner transmission and describe the government's efforts to obstruct investigation. *(August 17/24, 1985)*

Myths of the Middle East

This special issue of *The Nation* is devoted to breaking the logomachy jam in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by subjecting the emotion-sodden rhetoric that weighs down current thinking to a blast of fresh ideas. *(December 5, 1981)*

The Campaign to Smear the Nuclear Freeze Movement

Frank Donner offers a provocative analysis and thorough documentation of the outrageous attempts by right wingers in media, Congress and the Administration to discredit the nuclear freeze movement, charging that it is inspired and manipulated by the Soviet Union. *(November 6, 1982)*

Nuclear Samizdat

What do Russians think about the nuclear arms race? Two prominent Marxist dissidents, historian Roy A. Medvedev and his brother, biologist Zhores A. Medvedev, provide with clarity the unofficial viewpoint rarely found in the American Press. *(January 16, 1982)*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Explosive Intimacy

CHRISTINE STANSELL

WITHIN THE PLANTATION HOUSEHOLD: Black and White Women of the Old South. *By Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. University of North Carolina Press. 544 pp. $34.95.*

Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South is the first book of women's history to match in subtlety and rigor the best radical scholarship in "mainstream" Southern history. The heart of the book is a rich, sprawling argument about how womanly identities, white and black, served at once to strengthen, accommodate and destabilize the slave regime—an account that at times has the political and psychological resonances of a fine nineteenth-century novel. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has an unusually capacious and complex mind, and she never parcels out her interpretation to fit into the tidy monographic package that is the stock in trade of so much historical writing today. She is intent on keeping before us the ironies and contradictions, the queer and lethal turns of the "explosive intimacy" between women of two classes, one drenched in privilege, the other seared by suffering. Alternating chapters, exhaustively and meticulously researched, on slave women and slaveholding ladies examine how female psyches twisted around each other in the kitchen, parlor, bedroom and even the fields; how the work of the plantations brought women together on the basis of sex and simultaneously, on the basis of class, divided them into exploiter and exploited: "Everyday relations within the household guaranteed a high level of struggle, but, however taxing and bitter on both sides, the struggle . . . bound the women, black and white, into a network, if hardly a sisterhood."

The task is bold and ambitious. Following the direction taken by her sometime co-author (and her husband) Eugene Genovese, in his monumental *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, Fox-Genovese seeks to understand the history of the South as whites and blacks made it together. Southern history is a notoriously contentious field, and you can almost hear the feuds rumbling through the text even if you don't know enough to spot where, exactly, the trouble is coming from. Fox-Genovese moves through the heavy weather with admirable calm; there are no acrimonious footnotes. But at first it's slow going. Her strategy for warding off trouble, especially in her invocation of theories of Southern development, involves taking elaborate precautionary measures to shore up points that readers untutored in the academic schisms would probably happily take for granted.

This is especially true of the long first chapter, in which she presents her paradigm of the Southern household as the fundamental unit around which slave society constituted itself. In brief, what Fox-Genovese means to stress in this elegant, if strenuous, section is the centrality of Southern households—and therefore the black and white women who lived and worked in them—to the political economy of slavery. At a time when, in the North, patriarchal family households—working farms and artisan shops—were crumbling under the weight of rapid economic development, the expansion of slavery in the South gave a new lease to fatherly authority and kin-based domestic life. In the North, the atomization of family-based social relations made for other sorts of connections, nodes of new kinds of social life and power: free labor arrangements, mass political parties, the booming leisure culture of large cities, and religious and charity societies (especially important to middle-class women). Although these webs of associations existed to some degree in the South as well, Fox-Genovese argues that patriarchal households remained far more central there. Slavery did not fracture but rather maintained the master's cultural and juridical domain as the locus of social relations—the putative "family, white and black" packed with dependents both free and unfree, much lauded in antebellum Southern politics and lore. Taxing on readers as this discussion can be, it far surpasses in sophistication and learning any previous feminist attempt to understand the significance of women to the slave system.

Fox-Genovese challenges, on the one hand, those feminists who at their most simplistic have seen Southern patriarchy as oppressing black and white women alike, and have viewed the relations of chattel slavery—of owner and owned—as only a modification of the commonalities of sex that united plantation lady and slave. On the other hand, she discredits the assumption, implicit and sometimes explicit in many histories of the South, that gender was only incidental to slavery, that the system erased the significance of sexual differences and bound men and women into a homogeneity of class and race. The simplifications mirror each other: From one perspective, it doesn't much matter whether an antebellum Southern woman was white or black; from the other, it's inconsequential whether a slave was male or female, an owner a master or a mistress. Fox-Genovese rejects those perspectives and builds instead on understandings developed most sharply by black feminist historians and literary critics about the interdependence of racial, class and gender systems and the specific nature of black women's oppression.

The argument is quite complicated in the case of slaves, for Fox-Genovese maintains that their roles as women—what others expected of them, as distinct from black men, and what they expected of themselves—shifted as they moved between the world of the big house and that of the slave community. Black women, she argues, "matured into a distinct female sphere shaped by the assumptions of both slaveholders and slaves about gender relations . . . and gender roles." Superficially, it might seem they were beholden to the same conventions of womanhood as whites, since the slaves (notably house servants) so often had to pour their labor into maintaining standards of womanly propriety: setting fine tables; raising up their young white charges to act like "quality." Superficially, it might also seem that they weren't accountable at all, since their owners often didn't even count them as women, but rather as a kind of half sex. Planters abjured most concessions to sexual difference when it came to black labor, sending women out to the fields even though they believed the exclusion of "women" from heavy work to be a hallmark of civilization.

Fox-Genovese reconciles these two interpretations by investigating black women's own understanding of womanliness.

Christine Stansell teaches history at Princeton University and is the author of City of Women: Sex and Class in New York City, 1789–1860 *(Alfred A. Knopf).*

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Shrewdly, she notes that if the planters repudiated conventions of white femininity in regard to their slaves, so oftentimes did black women themselves: "many actually preferred some forms of labor normally viewed as reserved for men, notably plowing, and many others simply took pride in their physical strength and skill." Nonetheless—and here's the key—they never internalized the planters' denial of sexual difference "as a denial of their identity as women among their own people." House servants and field workers alike returned at night to the quarters wrung out from a full day's work, only to begin a second round of tasks: quilting, spinning, weaving, dyeing and sewing for their families and fellow workers.

For centuries in Africa, as in Europe and America, the domestic arts had been proud tokens of female purposefulness and skill. In this tortured regime, they served a special purpose in knotting fragile ties of the imagination to an African past, which in reality had been brutally sundered long before, and to a tenuous present which might also be violently wrested away. Fox-Genovese does not sentimentalize, but she wants us fully to recognize the heroism embedded in the mundane work of household production. "Love wore a black face," she concludes in one of her loveliest passages, "and it was as likely to be female as male, but like all loves, in all times and places, it remained hostage to the conditions and relations in which it was grounded."

Fox-Genovese is at her most tough-minded in these considerations of black women. She pushes aside images inherited from both the abolitionist and black nationalist traditions and starts fresh with a searching exploration of the varieties of female experience under slavery. Some of her subjects like other women, some don't. Some are heroically maternal and nurturing, others emotionally warped and crippled. Some embody the spirit of Christian transcendence, others are con artists, still others bide their time in murderous rage. They are of different ages; they have different sorts of relations with children, lovers, mistresses. She coaxes new insights from sparse evidence—teasing out changes in women's lives, for example, from the presence or absence over time of female names in the records of slave conspiracies and revolts.

Although Fox-Genovese is consistently scrupulous and imaginative with the evidence, however, she is not always at her most interesting in these sections. This is in part because of the minimal nature of the sources she had to use, but it's also because of the austerity of her approach. Somehow, the black women themselves recede behind the shifting grid of class, race and gender that Fox-Genovese creates to interpret them. Even the power of Harriet Jacobs's riveting account of her life as a slave diminishes in Fox-Genovese's rigorous analysis of the text, partly because she seems more preoccupied with a theoretical argument about the nature of slavery than she does with Jacobs herself.

In contrast, readers come to know the mistresses well. Fox-Genovese has a psychological grasp on the ladies from the start; the abstractions class/race/gender illuminate but never subordinate her white historical subjects. For one thing, slaveholding women are more easily explained in terms of gender than are the slaves, for in the master class womanhood was an all-embracing identity. The planters' milieu revolved around a continual display of masculinity and femininity, sometimes quiet and contained, sometimes showy and extravagant. The stereotypes are familiar: the rough-riding, hard-drinking, impetuous gentleman,

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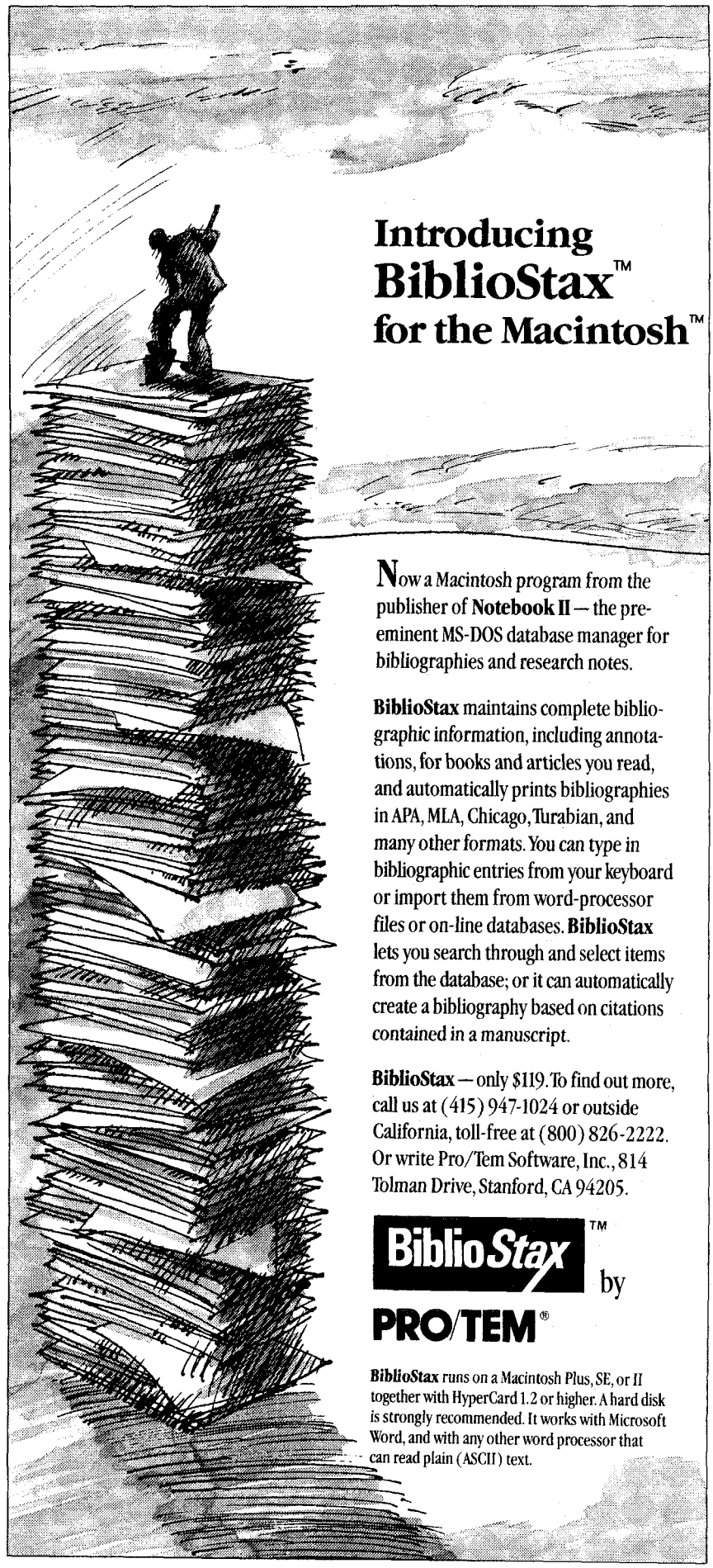
headstrong in his appetites, prone to violence in defense of his "honor" but courtly and gallant in the presence of the ladies; the white-skinned belle, by turns arch and demure, pampered, graceful, fashionable and accomplished.

Fox-Genovese periodically reminds us that such gender conventions are only a partial description of a more ambiguous reality, magnetic poles of emulation for a variety of people ranging from, let's say, men who were physically timid and by nature abstinent and retiring to women prone to loudness, bad complexions and spilling food on their bosoms. Nonetheless, what's surprising is the extent to which Fox-Genovese's research implicitly shows the stereotypes to have corresponded to lived experience. Consider this, the daily routine of a Southern teen-age girl: "Gertrude Clanton's day normally consisted—beyond reading, visiting, and shopping—in dressing and fixing her hair for the evening, gathering roses to dress flower pots, arranging her room, gathering roses and putting the leaves up to dry, and mending her kid gloves. Occasionally she passed a whole day in doing nothing at all."

Is it the Yankee in me or the feminist who revolts? Fox-Genovese would reply that the two are inseparable; her mission is to force readers like me to put aside our supposedly bourgeois prejudices about the importance of meaningful work and aspirations to women's well-being. She wants us to see the benefits of life for planter women in their own courtly terms. For although she moves judiciously between one female sphere and the other, it's finally the world of the ladies that draws out her most acute powers of sympathy and interest. The sections on black women, although revealing, finally lack the imaginative power of those on the mistresses. Much to her credit, her fascination with these women does not divert her from her central historical point, that they were no less racist, cruel or committed to slavery than their men. She wants us to understand that warm, loving, good-hearted white women could—and did—make their peace with slavery.

"The inherent injustice and inevitable atrocities need not be belabored," she informs her readers in magisterial passive voice. Rather than revive the tales of black flesh scourged raw, often on women's orders if not by their very hands, she makes what she sees as a more far-reaching and radical point: It was mostly decent women who did their part to uphold the Southern way of life. "At issue are the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ways in which human beings lived with and attempted to bring some order to what was indeed a 'monstrous system.'" Contrary to our preconceptions, that daily confrontation with monstrosity neither brutalized nor victimized white women; rather, she insists, they "emerge from their diaries and letters as remarkably attractive people."

This emphasis on the "attractive" qualities of slaveholding women—the image of the master class and its daughters, like the rose-picking Gertrude Clanton, as just folks—creates some ambiguity. On the one hand, it holds considerable political and historical power as a challenge to a neo-abolitionist, liberal portrayal of the plantation South as a pathological society run by sadists, perverts and bloodsuckers of both sexes. Nice women, she reminds us, could and did collaborate with and themselves commit crimes against humanity. Some mistresses loved their female slaves, but others—undoubtedly many more—tortured and persecuted them: whipped them, stuck them with pins and sewing needles, wrested their babies and husbands from them and sold them away for life, all in the name of order, economy and just plain good housekeeping.

But Fox-Genovese fails to carry her point about the banality of evil far enough. If her insistence on the humanity of the slaveholders is useful, it also, ultimately, cordons off these supposedly "human" qualities into an ahistorical realm that exists despite, not because of, the terrors of the slave regime. Her otherwise unfailingly intelligent analytical drive stops short outside this little sanctum. She enters it in order to demand our sympathy, across time, for the faith-inspiring goodness women bring to the terrible fixes they find themselves in. "Many were warm and attractive . . . and, by their own lights and the standards of their society, God-fearing, decent women." While these attributes help women bring order to a monstrous system, they are extraneous to the system itself. The interrogation of the patterns of class, gender and race ceases; niceness gets off the hook.

Yet decency, God-fearingness, attractiveness and warmth are also conventions of gender, race and class. Since the nineteenth century, these traits of personality have often been associated with the emotional lives of elite women and have distinguished "respectable" ladies from their supposedly less feeling, nurturant and pious counterparts in the lower classes. In Northern cities, for example, the charity lady could pride herself on her attentiveness to poor undernourished working-class children, a heartwarming contrast to their harsh, preoccupied mothers, who sank body and soul into the daily business of simply keeping their children fed. Decency, God-fearingness, attractiveness and warmth were also common literary tropes which privileged women in the nineteenth century used to represent themselves in diaries and letters—just the sources upon which Fox-Genovese depends heavily. A more practiced feminist eye might have seen the "attractiveness" of the mistresses as a banality in itself, and subjected it to a more exacting analysis of the collective psychology of female niceness and its place in the slave regime.

The makings of a more critical perspective—arresting observations on the emotional geography of the mistresses—are scattered through the book. Fox-Genovese is a gifted psychological analyst (not coincidentally, she has training in psychoanalysis), and she is often at her most exciting as a writer when she breaks Marxist feminist discipline and lets herself delve into fine-spun psychological exegesis. There are intriguing reflections, for example, on the overweening importance that daughterhood played for ladies young and old. The great role that Southern society proffered white women was that of the belle; there, on the stage of adolescence, young women could revel for one seductive moment in self-dramatization and triumph. But after the denouement of marriage, there was little soil in which female talents might grow and mature—no charity societies over which to preside, no religious or domestic press for which to write, no women's movement to set respectable ladies petitioning and writing speeches. The demographics of marriage fostered the fixation on daughterhood, Fox-Genovese notes, as "women normally married too young to develop into young adults in their parents' households. They went to their marriages still firmly identified with the role of daughter." Girls received little or no training in housewifery and virtually no formal education. In law, culture and politics, men reigned unchallenged. To put the matter bluntly: This was a class of daddy's girls, set up, ironically, to rule over, goad and torment a race of women who saw motherhood, not daughterhood, as the essence of their collective identity, and labor, not leisure, as the keystone of women's self-esteem.

Instead of drawing these threads to-

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gether, Fox-Genovese resorts to vague allusions to the benefits Southern life conferred on the mistresses. "Southern society extracted its price from slaveholding women, but it also afforded compensations." What, exactly, were they? Class privilege, certainly. No housework or child care. Pretty clothes. Sleeping late and doing nothing. But the "compensations" seem to thin in the sections on white women's relations with their own men. Fox-Genovese's evidence accumulates, piece by piece, into a portrait of a master class saturated in gendered fear and repression: women's fears of slave violence, of their husbands' philandering and their nasty tempers, of other women's gossip, of contamination by the ever-present others—blacks and poor whites—outside their charmed circle; men's fears of women's potential independence, their sexual desires, their clinging and dependence. Women "rarely ventured beyond the household without male escort"; few "admitted to the possibility that a young woman might be drawn to slave men, but then, such things could simply not be made subjects for discussion"; "Southern ladies implacably drew the social line between themselves and other white women whom they perceived as their inferiors." Yet the chapter detailing instance after instance of the reverberations of male authority—grim restraint and self-repression—ends, unaccountably, with a rosy paean to heterosexual love: "Whatever price the ladies paid for being encased in a slaveholding, male-dominated society . . . they somehow managed to come through with a striking lack of neurotic inhibition. And if the marvelous letters of countless husbands prove anything, their men loved them for it."

There's no doubt that life in this indulged class must have provided its *frissons*, its episodes of rhapsody and romance for the female partners of the patriarchs. But did the glories of intermittent masculine adoration and great sex wash away what was, from another perspective, the profound aimlessness of women's lives: the self-glorifying primness, the exaltation of petty privilege and the propensity to whimsical cruelty, the obsession with fashion, the embracing of childlike dependencies on men and slaves and of daughterhood as an identity extending well into adulthood? Oddly enough, the plantation mistresses are most interesting in the book when they appear along with black women. Here, in the parlor and the kitchen, encounters

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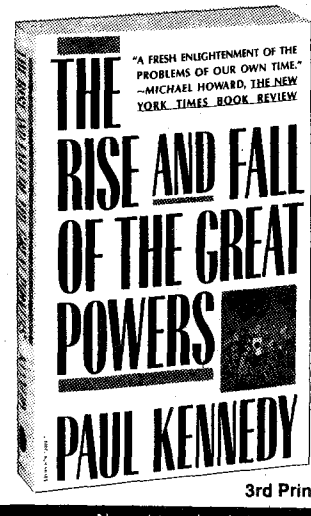
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took place that, for better and mostly for worse, taxed their full powers. Elsewhere, however, removed from these life and death struggles, they emerge in Fox-Genovese's treatment for all the world like good-hearted matrons making the best of a sequestered life, women who have learned to substitute the "compensations" of affluence and ease for the more remote rewards of worldly experience. After all these nice ladies, the two white Southern writers whom Fox-Genovese examines in depth—the doughty political economist Louisa McCord and the seething, acerbic diarist Mary Boykin Chesnut—come as a relief, if only because both were cut so markedly against the grain.

The Yankee feminist cannot help but feel, finally, that while the Old South ground the very life out of black women, it also ground the mental life out of the white ladies. To sense this is not to fall prey to the specious claim that they and their female slaves were united in a common oppression. It is rather to sharpen the critical edge of Fox-Genovese's interpretation of the master class. A comparison to the North here is instructive. McCord, as a "spinster" until what was, for the South, the advanced age of 30, wrestled with secret ambition and desire for literary fame. She brings to Fox-Genovese's mind Emily Dickinson, who as a single woman likewise struggled with those tendencies. Chesnut's aggrieved understanding of how much she, as a woman, had been excluded from the prerogatives of the men of her class called to my own mind her Yankee contemporary Elizabeth Cady Stanton's lifelong preoccupation with the same issues. But look at the differences! McCord was a second-rate political economist seeking to rejuvenate a derivative conservative political philosophy; Dickinson, a great artist who pushed far beyond the borders of Victorian culture right to the imaginative frontiers of modernism. Chesnut was a failed novelist who in frustration turned to the project of publishing her diary; Stanton, one of the great American radicals of the nineteenth century. If this is the best that privileged Southern womanhood could produce, what does it say about the character of the Old South and the balance of its "compensations" against the toll it exacted even from pampered female hearts and minds?

Within the Plantation Household will inevitably provoke this kind of historical soul-searching, and it's a testimony to the fineness of the work that it should do so. □

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Scandals of Ed Koch

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Manes crony and Koch appointee, took a bribe from an undercover cop and suggested that he brought Manes "bags of cash," prosecutors told Koch that Ryan "may lead us right to Donald Manes." In response, Koch ordered the sting closed down and Ryan was later arrested.

§ When a journalist first informed the Mayor that Bronx Democratic county leader Stanley Friedman had a secret interest in a $22 million contract he had pressured the city to award (and for which he was eventually sentenced to twelve years in prison), Koch said, "So what? There's nothing illegal here." When later challenged about Friedman's obvious self-dealing and deception by a critic at a town meeting, Koch lashed back with his now patented rhetorical riff: "Is everybody on the Board of Estimate corrupt? Are they all criminals? . . . Do you know of any criminality on his part? . . . If you don't, how dare you say those terrible things about him?" (Later, Koch said of Friedman's defalcations, "I was shocked. I was shocked," in near-perfect imitation of Claude Rains's famous comment in *Casablanca* when his own police raided Rick's.

Diversion No. 2: "Only Six." This is a classic half-truth. While "*only* six" of Koch's commissioners have been convicted of crimes (which is nothing to brag about), the number of top Koch appointees who resigned in disgrace because of indictment, conviction *or scandal* (e.g., Victor Botnick, Bess Myerson, Joseph DeVincenzo) add up to *only* a dozen. Add the county bosses to whom Koch ceded part of his administration—Manes, Friedman and Brooklyn Democratic Party chief Meade Esposito—and the tally reaches *only* fifteen. Then, if you include contractors who stole the city blind (Andy Capasso, Mike Lazar), and his convicted mid-level city employees—i.e., the appointees of his own appointees—Koch's tally reaches *only* 160-plus.

Is this broader definition of accountability fair? Yes, according to Koch's own criterion. When he tried to link former Mayor John Lindsay with Manhattan's Republican boss Vince Albano, then-Representative Koch said, "It's not a case of guilt by association, but you've simply got to hold a mayor responsible for his associates and their actions."

Diversion No. 3: Koch as Victim. What he "did" to "deserve" criticism was to run against the clubhouse pols in 1977 while simultaneously cutting deals with them, agreeing to provide patronage in exchange for their logistical support. Koch's denial of this arrangement collides with the memory of Esposito, who told Arthur Browne, Dan Collins and Michael Goodwin, the authors of *I, Koch*, "After he was elected he called us to City Hall. . . . He catered to us, in patronage, whatever. There were rumblings that Tony [Ameruso] was going to be dumped. I saved him by telling Koch that he's my guy." Newfield and Barrett describe how Koch's own merit selection committee rejected Ameruso as unqualified to be transportation commissioner, only to see Koch attack them for being "anti-Italian." Having enjoyed the benefits of his Faustian bargain in 1977, Koch apparently objects to the price he is now paying in indictments, convictions and lost popularity. But the city too is paying a price. As Koch might put it, Was it a coincidence that Ameruso's office was in charge of the Williamsburg Bridge when that span was allowed to become as rotten as his department?

At least one judge regards Koch as more accomplice than victim. When U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani planned to quote from a mayoral statement about the "betrayal of the public trust" during Friedman's trial on bribery charges, Judge Whitman Knapp—an expert on corruption himself, being the Knapp of the 1970s Knapp Commission—told him not to bother. "Knapp had listened for months to evidence of the administration's acquies-

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cence in the corruption that had consumed sectors of a city government," write Newfield and Barrett, "and it was impossible for him now to consider the Mayor a victim. Giuliani took Knapp's advice."

Ed Koch has been what Rudyard Kipling would have called a "shut-eyed sentry." ("But I'd shut my eyes in the sentry box/so I didn't see nothin' wrong.") Comedian Jackie Mason puts the point more colloquially: "Every time you ask Koch about the scandals, he says, 'I didn't know this; I didn't know that.' All this time you'd think he was Mayor of Philadelphia. His opinion of people depends on how they're doing. If they're doing great, he nominated them; if they're indicted, he never heard of them."

Beyond the book's story is the story of the book. The authors are well-known advocacy journalists who believe that good reporting means refusing to be merely a conveyor belt for official sources, and who together have logged some thirty-five years at *The Village Voice*. (Newfield has recently moved to *The Daily News*.)

Newfield and Koch have had a long personal relationship.* Friendly in the early 1970s, Koch once called Newfield to congratulate the writer on his 1974 *Voice* article "Meade, the Mob and the Machine." "Keep it up, I know he's a gangster," said Koch, three years before breaking bread with Esposito and more than a decade before saying he couldn't have known of Esposito's darker side.

But as Koch veered to the right, epitomized by his sudden exploitation of capital punishment in his 1977 mayoral race ("Hi, I'm Ed Koch. I'm for capital punishment. Are you?"), Newfield became increasingly critical and Koch increasingly offended. Now their feud rivals that of Nixon and Woodward/Bernstein. Koch demanded that Mario Cuomo disavow Newfield as a friend, according to Cuomo's *Diaries*, before Koch would consider supporting him for governor in early 1982 (Cuomo wouldn't). The Mayor periodically tries to get Newfield fired; calls him "a lying, contemptible person"; writes obsessive, denunciatory letters to the editor about him [see *The Nation*, July 4/11, 1987]; and once startled a *Washington Post* reporter by giving him, unsolicited, a derogatory file on Newfield.

Despite this feud, or perhaps because of it, Newfield and Barrett have written a restrained book which allows a tale right out of Allen Drury or Damon Runyon to tell itself. The result is a tour de force that has earned a clutch of favorable reviews and even the private praise of three of Koch's closest confidants—Robert Wagner Jr., Herbert Rickman and Fritz Schwartz.

The book works for two essential reasons. First, the authors know the story unusually well because they are a part of it. They have followed city scandals for decades and broken several of the biggest stories (e.g., the devastating Myerson grand jury report, Ameruso's mob ties). Their experience on the political, government and law enforcement beats enables them to peel away layers of corruption. And they know all the principals. Along with 500 interviews and extensive wiretap records, they've got the goods.

Second, the authors avoid both shrillness and the temptation to overwhelm readers with a Niagara of undigested detail. Instead, they employ a narrative

* *Caveat lector:* The reviewer is not as ignorant of the central characters in this book as, say, the North jury is of Ollie. First, I consider myself a friend of author Newfield and an acquaintance of Barrett. Second, Ed Koch and I hold each other in minimal high regard: In 1980, I publicly criticized him for "racially polarizing the city," which infuriated him; when I informed him in 1986 of my intention to run for the U.S. Senate, he said, "When have you ever said anything nice about me?"; subsequently, he supported my Democratic primary opponent, John Dyson, and then the Republican incumbent, Alfonse D'Amato.

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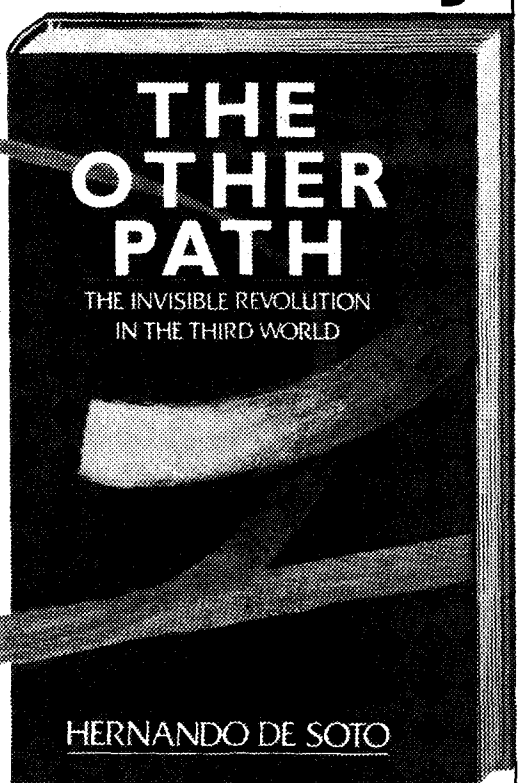

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style that manages to combine Joe McGinniss and Joe Friday. They tell an arresting story—literally—that blends courtroom drama, political intrigue and the psychology of power.

Their touches of color vivify the prevalence and the "banality of evil." We see the cunning Stanley Friedman, Mephistophelean in his goatee, running patronage and politics in the Bronx without ever being elected to public office, his swagger betrayed by a trembling lower lip. Donald Manes and Meade Esposito, the "twin towers of insider trading," were both former reformers whose clout on the Board of Estimate produced their private deals and self-dealing. These three lived by Roy Cohn's Law of Markers, which defines every relationship as a bank account of favors deposited or withdrawn.

Then there's the unadulterated sleaze of Alex Liberman, head of the city's leasing bureau, who tried to coerce a kickback from a contractor by reminding him they were both Holocaust survivors and who laundered his kickbacks on city leases through a temple. (Talk about chutzpah!) Another nervy felon is Mario Biaggi, who begged for mercy because of his wife's deteriorating health and her reliance on him; he was convicted of accepting an unlawful gratuity while on a Caribbean trip with his mistress.

Starting with the moment Donald Manes found out that one of his bagmen had paid off an F.B.I. agent, which eventually led to the end of both his scams and his life, *City for Sale* puts two years of headlines into context and perspective. It explains how politicians who wanted kickbacks and contractors who wanted cable franchises, building leases, parking garages and business services could steal without remorse. By the end, it's hard not to conclude that a great city has been for sale or rent and that its Mayor was a teller in the bank of favors that financed the deals.

In 1977, Koch repeatedly said of New York City, "I'm going to make it like it used to be." Who knew that he meant the scandal-prone administration of Mayor Jimmy Walker?

City for Sale is important not only for its text but for its context—the 1989 mayoral campaign. (When separately asked whether they intended to influence the race, Newfield says yes, Barrett no.) Koch enters his most difficult election year with a noticeable lack of luck and timing.

First, he may have hoped that mass amnesia would dull the sting of scandal. In a city where there's always new mayhem, it was plausible to assume that voters would forget Donald Manes, Stanley Friedman and bagman Geoffrey Lindenauer when they could follow the stories of Robert Chambers, Tawana Brawley and Joel Steinberg. And since the Watergate trials established the smoking-gun test—if you're not caught confessing on tape, you're not guilty—Koch could have persuasively argued that he was careless, not culpable.

Until *City for Sale*. And until the exposure of the Talent Bank, which was set up to recruit more qualified minorities and women into city government but ended up recruiting unqualified white men recommended by county leaders. By exposing Koch's repeated pretense that he ran an administration without patronage, the Talent *Bunk* affair could be devastating. Already, two staff members testifying under oath have denied destroying documents and setting up a patronage system despite contrary evidence and witnesses. So Koch's candidacy may be hanging on this question: Will Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau indict the Koch aides for perjury in this election year?

Second, Koch's woes have attracted several opponents who credibly challenge his various electoral vulnerabilities. Rudolph Giuliani, of course, can say he helped clean up the city; his attempt to be a Lindsay Republican on urban issues and a Khomeini Republican on crime would be a politically powerful combination. Harrison (Jay) Goldin is Koch without shtick or indictments—a smart, experienced challenger who knows how to goad Koch into error. Richard Ravitch can argue that his vast (if appointive) governmental experience equips him to improve the quality of city services. And David Dinkins will run as a healer who can bring the city together after Koch's divisiveness.

Indeed, Koch's production of dumb or mean statements has reached Olympian levels: He has said he looks forward to speaking at Breslin's funeral; compared Ted Kennedy and Goldin to Nazis; belittled Soviet schoolchildren and homeless kids; opposed giving money to beggars ("Just say no. If you feel guilty, consult a priest"); claimed the British served a helpful purpose in Northern Ireland—then reversed himself; called U.N. members "gangsters, cutthroats and piranhas"; advocated compulsory AIDS testing for tourists coming into New York; disrupted a White House drug conference by shouting insults at speakers; said he'd "like to choke" a state commissioner who disagreed with him; said a leading Hispanic assemblyman would "sell his mother" to get re-elected; argued that most blacks are anti-Semitic and, *after* the Howard Beach tragedy, maintained (contrary to fact) that black-on-white hate crime exceeded white-on-black hate crime; and, of course, feverishly and unrelentingly attacked Jesse Jackson as a liar and radical whom all Jews should oppose. (One result was that 90 percent of city voters opposed Koch's chosen presidential candidate, Al Gore.)

THE CIRCUS

You say we need to be happy because
The material world is a door
That never closes, a jewel
Of astonishing purity,
A love incapable of weakening,
Plantlife that simply grows and grows.
It's a business that won't lay off its employees,
And a terrific circus.

See? See? Of course I know all this.
Who doesn't know it?
Even my viruses want to celebrate
Christmas and Easter
And attend the opera.
Even my white blood corpuscles intend
To vote in the next Presidential election.
So please explain to me
Why I am crying now,
Why I am sick of it,
That's what's unclear.

Alicia Ostriker

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It is understandable that Koch, who operates by a credo of with malice toward all and charity to none, once admitted "there is something that is really vicious in me"; why he's such an exile in his own party that he had to go to Ireland rather than the Democratic National Convention; and why the dignified Dinkins will contrast favorably with a man whose hero is Fiorello La Guardia but who imitates Morton Downey Jr.

Third, even if voters were inclined to forget and forgive the corruption and bile, what about the city's declining quality of life? The ratio of cops to violent crimes committed was 1 to 1 in New York City in the 1950s, 1 to 5 in 1981, and 1 to 19 last year. Some two-fifths of all children end up abandoning school before they graduate, and nearly one out of every fifty babies born in one South Bronx district may carry the AIDS virus. Homelessness grows, child abuse increases, crack proliferates, the middle class flees—as New York is Calcuttaed between the well-off and the persistent poor.

This confluence of scandal, divisiveness and declining services has left Koch at the brink of extinction. While he entered his 1985 re-election bid forty points ahead in the polls, he enters his 1989 race thirty-one points behind Giuliani. He can rarely attend a large rally without being booed. While no one should underestimate Koch's energy, shrewdness and resilience—nor ignore the media's gullibility about a "new Koch" who is allegedly gentler and more populist—at the moment he would decisively lose a campaign based on the single question, Had enough? In fact, like Chile's recent yes or no vote on Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the New York City race will also likely come down to a referendum on the long-serving incumbent, regardless of who runs against him.

Given those numbers, one can almost feel sympathy for Ed Koch, except that he's among the least sympathetic of people. A classic self-absorbed bully—fawning to those he fears, such as Cuomo and Rupert Murdoch; overbearing to those subordinate to him, such as the homeless and legislators—he now lacks, like the abusive Representative Wayne Hays before him, a cushion of good will when crisis comes. His is a double tragedy. He's the reformer who sold out not for money but power, and who now berates past allies who kept the liberal faith he so conveniently shed. And he squandered an obvious intelligence and popularity by attacking people rather than problems, a tendency reduced to parody when, with the national media in tow last April, he in effect said New York's biggest problem was Jesse Jackson rather than crack or AIDS or homelessness. A Mayor who led pickets when movie theaters raised prices from $6 to $7 has not rallied citizens against the growing poverty of the city's children.

The result of this twin failure is that the city once renowned for its public hospitals and public transportation, for the strength of its unions and successes as a melting pot, now ranks with Chicago for racial divisiveness and Trenton for sleaze. The final tragedy is that, for all his nasty comments and letters to the editor, only Koch brought down Koch. Not Newfield and Barrett, not Breslin, but Koch. And his decline mirrors the decline of the city he said he loved, but which he sacrificed to the bonfire of his vanity. □

BOOK NOTES.

APPALACHIAN PATTERNS: Eleven Short Stories. *By Bo Ball. Independence Publishers. 207 pp. $12.95.*

The author's note to *Appalachian Patterns* describes Bo Ball as a teacher of Shakespeare, an occupation beautifully suited to a writer who uses words as if he is hearing them for the first time. Ball acts as translator of the language indigenous to rural Appalachia and respects the inhabitants enough not to get too comfortable with these unfamiliar words. The strength of these stories, all set in Buchanan County, Virginia, lies in their language, refreshing to readers whose ears are dulled by nightclub jargon and restaurant patter.

In Buchanan County characters might speak in tongues just as easily as they tend their crops, burn lard cakes over the stove or conceive a child at age 13. God visits these people; sin sets them apart: those who sin, those who judge. Full of unflattering observation and startling poetry, the stories share Flannery O'Connor's spiritual sadism. The most bizarre circumstances—cruelty among the commonplace—are welcome escapes from the relentless sickness and ignorance that accompany deep poverty.

In "The Father," a weary and bitter welfare worker who has to "talk hick" to her clients learns that the baby born

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to the local whore is the child of her own husband. In response, she drops her husband at the woman's gate and goes home to embrace her God in a frenzied manner reminiscent of O'Connor's "The Enduring Chill."

"The Quilt"—a story we anticipate from the title of the collection, even from the jacket design—records the gatherings of a community of women bonded by their quilting skills. Ball's remarkable ear for word combinations and the vernacular elevates their conversations about children, husbands, homes and scandals from gossip to the telling and retelling of lives.

Ball writes of a region with high illiteracy rates; thus, quite naturally, oral history is the prevalent means of storytelling. In a way, the setting down of these Appalachian patterns betrays them. But Ball deftly hides the author's voice in detailed observation, and the reader is barely aware of reading rather than listening.

Don't rush. These stories are too delicate and too strange to be taken in all at once. One of the most successful, "The Changing of the Guard," follows a boy and his blind father as they walk from their house into town. Along the way the child provides the scope and color that his father cannot see. However, instead of reporting, he invents, transforming a tire-smashed garter snake into a still-quivering rattler, or presenting a regal picture of "tree limbs almost brushin' the ground" when the father asks after the old Wine-Sap. Then through the author the reader learns what the boy really sees: "Its trunk was half-eaten by wood ants, and only a few knotted apples clung to its gnarled limbs."

The story is about interpretation, about imagining what is not there to shape a different reality. So Ball acts as eyes for his readers, who probably have never seen this world and never will. He interprets a savage terrain to make it understandable and, inevitably, a little gentler, just as the Appalachian patterns of the quilts warm and soothe those who make and use them:

> That was what the Friendships covered. Before the winter sky frowned darkness, the women rose to walk the one-to-five miles home, thinking perhaps of spring when green could be yanked from the ground. Every winter each house was enriched by at least one Friendship, and in my third through seventh winters I followed Mama to all their houses and sat neath the quilting frames with the other children and listened to the low allowings of the quilters.

SUSANNA SONNENBERG

Susanna Sonnenberg writes fiction and works at Houghton Mifflin in New York.

FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

New York Stories
The Adventures of Baron Munchausen

For the price of a single admission to *New York Stories*, you get to see a drama filmed by Martin Scorsese in his most bravura style, as well as a comedy by Woody Allen at very near the top of his form. That's the good news. The bad news involves Francis Coppola, the third contributor to the film, whose segment is so thoroughly, megalomaniacally bad that it becomes, in a perverse way, the must-see part of this anthology. At first, I was going to recommend that you leave to buy popcorn when Coppola's story hits the screen and stay in the lobby till it's over. Then the enormity of it struck me, half an hour after I'd left the theater.

But before we get to that, here are the good parts of *New York Stories*, beginning with Scorsese's "Life Lessons." Working with a script by Richard Price, Scorsese returns to the downtown art scene he visited in *After Hours* for a drama about sexual power games, as played between a famous, middle-aged painter (Nick Nolte) and the young woman (Rosanna Arquette) who is his pupil, studio assistant and former lover. Bearded, shambling, with a pair of transparent-rimmed glasses at the tip of his nose, Nolte plays the kind of Abstract Expressionist he-man who has lived in lower Manhattan all his adult life but still talks like a Wyoming cowboy. Using a garbage-can lid as his palette, he paints canvases that are never less than a block long, while concentrating his mind by blasting 1960s rock music from a much-bespattered cassette deck. When first seen, he is three weeks away from a major gallery opening and hasn't finished a single painting, which is evidently standard procedure for him. This is the moment when Rosanna Arquette, who understandably feels a bit dwarfed in this environment, decides she wants out.

He won't hear of her abandoning New York and her art. "It's a suicide," he

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says. He loves her so much that he'll let her remain in the loft, where she can paint and profit from the invaluable "life lessons" he gives her, even though she'll no longer sleep with him. "Baby, I'm your ally against horse dung and fraud," he swears, though it's his left hand that he holds up, which ought to be a warning. What follows is indeed a life lesson in artistic endeavor, emotional intimidation and a particular form of go-for-broke romanticism. The ending is a bit too pat; but the art-scene milieu is authentic enough, the performances could not be better and the filmmaking is at the virtuoso level throughout. Scorsese's camera never stops moving; Thelma Schoonmaker's editing seems to lock right into your heartbeat; and the cinematography by Nestor Almendros is all but beyond praise. I would happily have paid to see *New York Stories* just to marvel at his light and color.

But then, there's Woody Allen's segment. Maybe he relaxed a bit when asked to make a small film, feeling the stakes were lower than usual; maybe, looking for a model, he recalled some of his better short stories, such as "The Kugelmass Episode." For whatever reason, he has come up with a brilliantly funny fable about the ultimate nightmare of the Jewish son. Titled "Oedipus Wrecks," the film stars Allen as a 50-year-old bachelor, Mia Farrow as his fiancée, and the redoubtable Mae Questel as Sadie Millstein, whose every word and gesture can still transform her son into a mortified adolescent. It would be unforgivable to reveal how Sadie, who begins as a merely human aggravation, grows into the Platonic form of the Jewish mother. Suffice it to say that the son must resort to the aid of a psychic (Julie Kavner), who represents a danger never before encountered in Woody Allen's films: an eligible Jewish woman.

"Oedipus Wrecks" is the final segment of *New York Stories*, and when I saw it, there was heartfelt applause. I can't say the same for Coppola's segment, "Life Without Zoe." On the surface, this is an inane fantasy about a spoiled but supposedly endearing 12-year-old, the daughter of a celebrated father and globe-trotting mother. She's something like Eloise, the kiddie-book character who lives in the Plaza; the difference is that Zoe lives across the street, in the Sherry Netherland. In truth, though, Zoe has no connection to New York. Except for a few location shots, Coppola's segment could have been filmed on any soundstage—which may be the clue to his intentions.

The spoiled but magical Zoe shares her name with the studio Coppola founded and then ran into the ground, Zoetrope. If I'm correct—an appalling but real possibility—the film would then be an allegory about Coppola's loss of the studio. There may be no other explanation for "Life Without Zoe," an apparently senseless confection that lacks both narrative coherence and emotional grounding. The film becomes explicable only if you assume the spendthrift little girl represents the studio; the fatally talented but absent father represents Coppola; the parties Zoe arranges represent such flops of the Zoetrope soundstage as *One From the Heart*. And who represents the audience? I'm worried that we're the homeless man who lives in a cardboard box outside the Sherry Netherland. In an act that symbolizes the bounty of art, Zoe delivers a bagful of Hershey's Kisses to him; he croaks, "That's what I love about New York."

It is not the sort of thing that *I* love. But, having recognized the allegory in "Life Without Zoe," I now find it impossible to stop thinking about the film. Coppola has been a major filmmaker; his place in Hollywood history is secure. Like everyone else, I long to see him make full use of his talent again. That's why I'm haunted by "Life Without Zoe," which opens up unanticipated perspectives of egomania and self-delusion. When the full effect of it hit me, I felt like Shelly Duvall in *The Shining*, at the moment when she sees what her husband has *really* been typing.

Terry Gilliam once wrote an entertaining and useful little book about film animation, as he practiced it for *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. No doubt you will recall his sequences, in which cutouts of boots would periodically descend to squish cutouts of Edwardian ladies and gentlemen. In discussing how he created those scenes, Gilliam gave this memorable summary of his world view: If it looks like a lot of work, don't do it.

That was his world view in 1978, anyway, when he published *Animations of Mortality*. Since then, he has made three films that look like a *lot* of work: *Time Bandits*, *Brazil* and now the most elaborate of them all, *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*. At a moment when epic filmmaking has become a rarity, Gilliam still wants the lavish costumes, the stupendous sets, the cast of thousands. He also wants ideas—or, rather,

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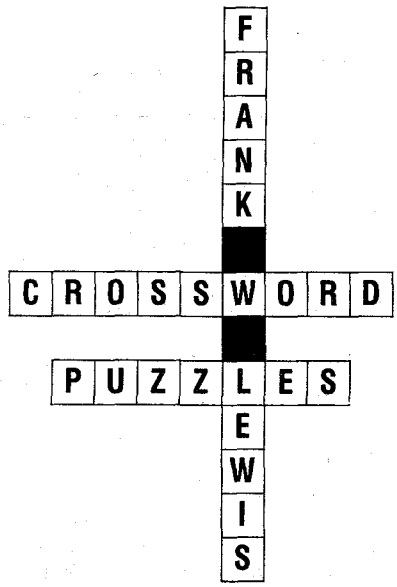

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Ideas. Like Cecil B. de Mille after a Great Books seminar—or maybe Mortimer J. Adler after a screening of *The Ten Commandments*—Gilliam piles up historical asides, chunks of various ideologies and philosophical one-liners while filling the frame to bursting with lovingly detailed spectacle. That the details are often of decay only adds to the sense of import. These are epics about an eternal cutout boot, forever squishing the faces of cutout people.

Not that *Baron Munchausen* lacks uplift; it even has moments of humor, though fewer of them than Gilliam may think. It's not as funny as *Time Bandits*, which had the comic advantage of unrestrained misanthropy; nor is it as witty as *Brazil*, which had Tom Stoppard helping with the dialogue. As written by Gilliam and Charles McKeown, *Baron Munchausen*'s lines tend to sound like afterthoughts. The surroundings swallow the words, so that even the most expert actors, including John Neville as the Baron, must toss off the dialogue like a handful of confetti thrown into a typhoon. And yet, this time, we are meant to feel that the great, incessant roar is a message of hope.

The opening titles set the scene: "Late 18th Century. The Age of Reason. Wednesday." The Sultan of Turkey is besieging a European town that has recently undergone a Jacobin revolution. While Turkish artillery turns the place into rubble, the local Robespierre (Jonathan Pryce) tries to keep the populace entertained by engaging an itinerant acting company to perform *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*. All is well, so long as the legendary liar is merely a character to be mocked. But then the *real* Baron Munchausen walks into the theater, to denounce the show as a fraud and reveal the truth, however improbable.

The First Citizen is outraged. He stands for science and progress—and here an unreconstructed fabulist (and aristocrat) is seducing the people. Before the confrontation can become deadly, though, the Baron escapes the besieged town in a hot-air balloon, swearing to return with his miraculously talented servants to defeat the Turks. "He won't get far on hot air and fantasy," mutters the First Citizen, in case the audience has not yet registered the reason-versus-imagination theme. And so the Baron soars off toward the moon, accompanied by a young girl (Sarah Polley) who believes in him more fervently than Reagan believed in Star Wars.

I hesitate to suggest comparisons between Gilliam and our departed First Citizen, especially since the former is frequently entertaining and the latter has gone West. Nevertheless, something Reaganoid haunts *Baron Munchausen*. The filmmaker has created uncanny and often beautiful fantasy worlds, using the latest technology and pots of money. Then he's turned around and added half an hour's worth of preaching about the superiority of fantasy—lies, if you will—to science. If fantasy is so much better, why didn't he use a bit more of that and a bit less machinery? Why does he seem to believe, with Reagan, that you have to back up your lie with a trillion dollars? If Gilliam's epic had consistently lifted off the earth, I wouldn't complain—I'd be the first to congratulate him on a trillion dollars well spent. But there's a heaviness to *Baron Munchausen* that betrays the film's self-contradiction. A little more flair in the dialogue, a little more confidence in the audience's ability to figure things out for themselves, and the picture might have been the ode to imagination that Gilliam envisioned. Instead, *Baron Munchausen* drags along its machinery like a guilty conscience.

Apart from the excellent John Neville in the title role, the large cast features Eric Idle (who is wasted as one of the Baron's servants), Oliver Reed as Vulcan, Uma Thurman as Venus, Valentina Cortese as Queen of the Moon, and, in an uncredited appearance, Robin Williams as the Moon's King. He turns the role into a cross between Mussolini and—you guessed it—Robin Williams. □

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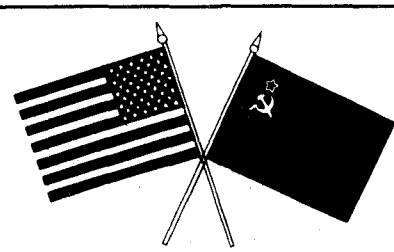

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S	T	A	R	C	H	■	R	O	T	A	T	I	O	N
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D	R	U	M	■	R	O	U	N	D	A	B	O	U	T
■	F	■	A	■	E	■	S	■	■	■	E	■	T	■
A	L	M	O	N	D	S	■	T	H	E	A	T	E	R
■	Y	■	R	■	■	■	B	■	E	■	S	■	M	■
A	S	T	I	G	H	T	A	S	A	■	T	O	O	L
■	T	■	■	■	E	■	T	■	D	■	■	■	N	■
A	R	T	I	F	A	C	T	■	A	P	P	I	A	N
■	O	■	O	■	R	■	I	■	C	■	I	■	R	■
S	K	A	T	E	S	O	N	T	H	I	N	I	C	E
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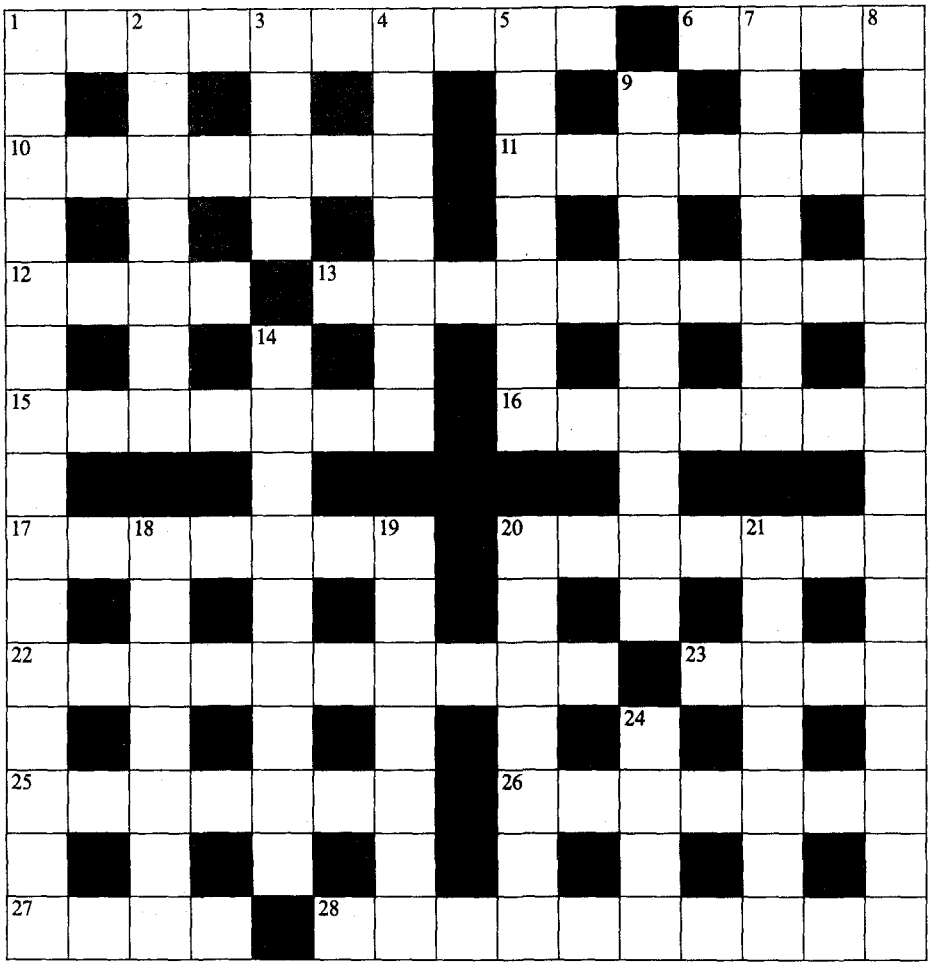

ACROSS

1 and 6 An excuse for young male chauvinism? Yes, Bobby will so change! (4,4,2,4)
10 To provide possibly a sole example around the burial place? (7)
11 Part of the flower coming from an alfresco roll around it? (7)
12 Car which the shop has to take back? (4)
13 Where Rousseau said man is in irons. (10)
15 Overwhelm a few, at least, in an inspiring way. (7)
16 Possibly attract attention while around the little religious figure? (7)
17 Going down is quite proper around the capital of Spain. (7)
20 Sort of hop-headed lamb, properly speaking, associated with a weedy death. (7)
22 Gets rid of the boyfriend, but not as the result of an underhanded fling. (6,4)
23 A get-away message for Tom? (4)
25 A necklace in more than one string, i.e., mixed up with such as the Mississippi. (7)
26 At one, all together. (7)
27 and 28 Needing no help, slice fine stuff out of it. (4-10)

DOWN

1 Intermittently this is made by healthy portions of the desert, getting what the Knave of Hearts seemed to want. (2,4,3,6)
2 Measure what might be in front of the house, which takes some time. (7)
3 A capricious notion suggests the capital of Washington to him. (4)
4 The haven of the French, being quite a place. (2,5)
5 Stern oar, where the seat is not all that good. (4,3)
7 Is it Leo that could be most like that slinky stage villain? (7)
8 An announcement about leave in a major office of the government? (5,10)
9 Noah, possibly, responsible for Jenny—but not properly. (9)
14 Pass through? Just like an agent, of sorts! (2-7)
18 Contract for quiet, with a liver upset! (7)
19 One who liked solitude might be a god over the water (over the water). (7)
20 A person's spirit is what one thinks of first, if egoistic. (7)
21 Give up milk, like a crazy cat in recently deceased circumstances. (7)
24 Enter after this for the worst shock—it's quite a story! (4)

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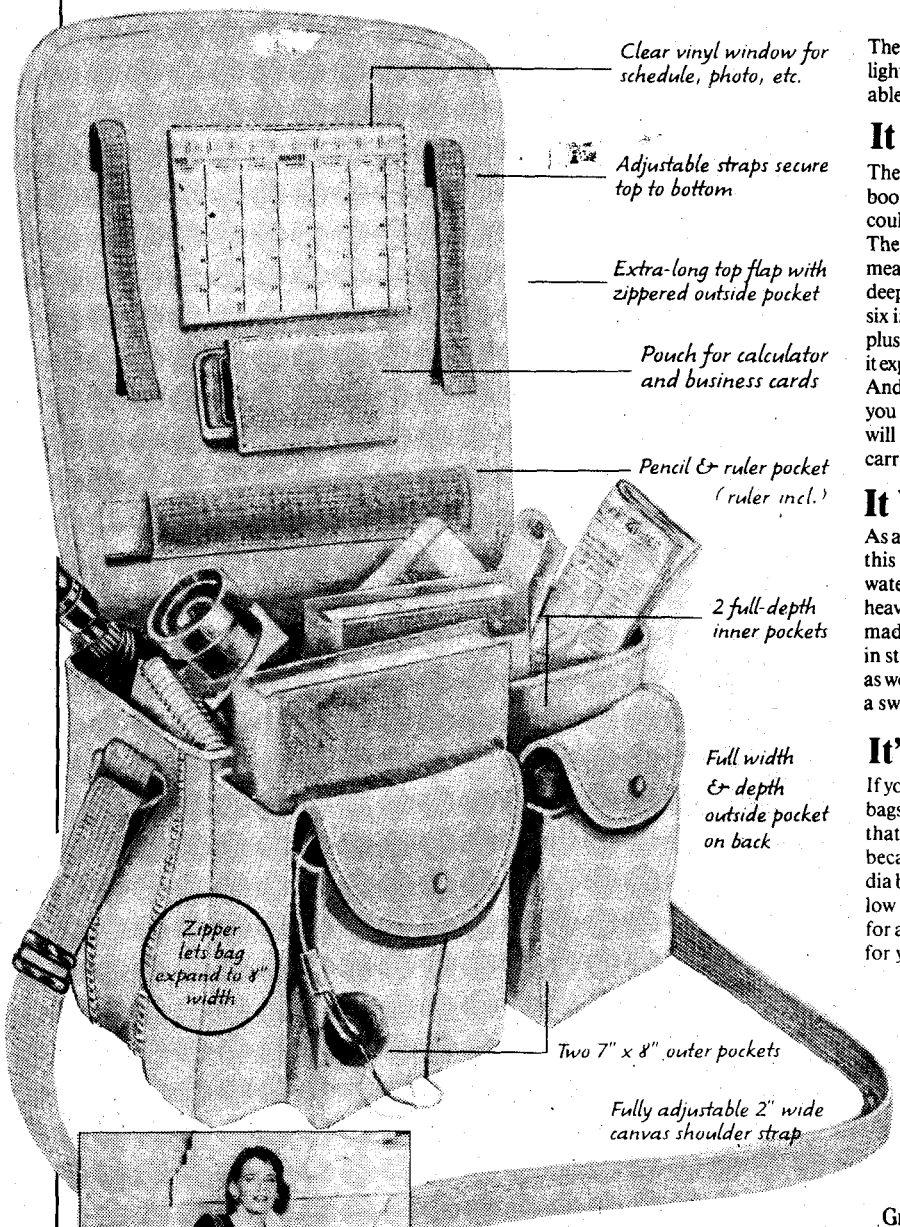
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GRAY #1377019			
BROWN #1377035			
KHAKI #1377043			
BLUE #1377068			
Merchandise Total			
For NY, NJ, PA, MA, MN Deliveries, add applicable sales tax			
Add $2.00 per bag ordered for shipping & insurance			
ORDER TOTAL			

NAME

ADDRESS APT. #

CITY/STATE/ZIP

METHOD OF PAYMENT
☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Diners Club

CREDIT CARD NUMBER EXP DATE

SIGNATURE

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